

**Of Roots and Offshoots:
Fijian Political Thinking, Dissent and the Formation of
Political Parties (1960 – 1999)**

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**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
of the Australian National University**



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Statement

I declare this thesis to be my original work



.....

Alumita L. V. Durutalo

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Abstract

Of Roots and Offshoots: Fijian Political Thinking, Dissent and the Formation of Political Parties (1960 – 1999)

Party politics in Fiji was introduced during the time of decolonisation in the 1960s as part of the modern political system of democratic representation. The old Fijian ways of “veirogorogoci” or consensus in the selection of leaders in the context of socio-political institutions such as “itokatoka”, “mataqali”, “yavusa”, “vanua” and “matanitu”, were overshadowed by the introduction of the colonial state and its new system of government. While the new system of leadership under the colonial state was all-encompassing, the old systems of leadership were localized affairs in the context of socio-political groups against a backdrop of diverse cultural realities.

From cession in 1874 and the formation of the “Matanitu iTaukei”, Native (later Fijian) Administration or the Fijian version of indirect rule, modern Fijian leadership concentrated in the eastern and northeastern regions of Fiji under a few powerful chiefs. From 1904 to 1963, Fijian representatives in the Legislative Council, were nominated by the governor upon the recommendation of the Native Council (later Council of Chiefs), were a few chiefs and commoners, mostly from the eastern and northeastern regions of Fiji. Together with chiefs who were employed in the system of indirect rule, this elite Fijian group successfully pacified and governed Fijians under the native regulations which were formulated by the colonial government. All forms of dissent were suppressed and the modern leadership system under the colonial state attempted a social construction of a homogenous Fijian society through chiefs employed in the Matanitu iTaukei. The symbiotic relationship between the colonial state and the Matanitu iTaukei chiefs sanctioned the traditional power of these leaders and strengthened the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy, a traditional belief system which emerged in eastern and northeastern Fiji since the early 1800s. It emerged out of the hierarchical Polynesian types of chiefdoms found in these regions of Fiji.

However, the peaceful image of a “homogenous society” during the colonial era was challenged with the introduction of party politics in the 1960s by Fijians in different social groups and regions throughout Fiji. The new democratic system was a catalyst for the rekindling of old forms of political thinking and dissent amongst diverse socio-political groups in different regions of Fiji. Added to the articulation of traditional forms of political thinking and dissent was the forging of multiethnic alliances across the racial divide. The union of these political forces challenged both the modern and traditional basis of the eastern and northeastern political elites between 1960 and 1999. Spontaneous party formation in the period under study indirectly implied a “legitimacy contest” amongst social groups in different regions of Fiji.

Attempts to foster Fijian political unity through the military coups in 1987, the promulgation of a new Constitution in 1990, and the formation of the SVT party in 1991 to replace the Alliance Party, failed since Fijians continued to form new political parties or joined multiracial political parties. Rivalries and dissent have shattered the myth of homogeneity which was socially constructed with the advent of colonial rule. Fijian party politics between 1960 and 1999 has been a medium to observe the merger and interplay of the powerful dictates of diverse customs and traditions with modern liberal democracy. The period under study narrates the rise and fragmentation of an orthodoxy through party politics. Within this milieu Fijians competed to define their location and identity in the new political discourse.

ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Alliance Party. This party was formed in 1966 and was led by Fiji's first Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara until 1987.

ANC – All National Congress. The party was formed by Apisai Tora and some former members of the Alliance Party in 1991.

BLV – Bose Levu Vakaturaga. It is also known as the Great Council of Chiefs or the GCC.

BKV – Bai Kei Viti. A western Fijian based political party which was formed in the province of Ba in 2001. Apisai Tora was a founder of the party.

CNP – Christian Nationalist Party: Sakeasi Butadroka's Fijian Nationalist Party had a name change in 1992 and adopted this name.

COIN – Coalition of Independent Nationals

FA – Fijian Association or the "Soqosoqo iTaukei", which later became the Fijian arm of the Alliance Party was formed in 1956.

FAP – Fijian Association Party. It was formed in 1993 by Josevata Kamikamica.

FCP – Fijian Communist Party: or the "Bula Tale Communist Party" was formed by, Ramatau, a Western Fijian from Nadroga in the 1960s.

FDP – the Fijian Democratic Party was formed in 1966 as an amalgamation of Tora's Western Democratic Party and Nadalo's Fijian National Party.

FLP – Fiji Labour Party. It was formed in 1985.

FNP – Fijian National Party – formed in Nadroga in western Viti Levu in 1963 by Isikeli Nadalo.

FNP – Fijian Nationalist Party – formed in 1975 by Sakeasi Butadroka of Rewa.

GVP – General Voters Party. A party which was formed by non-Fijian and non-Indian voters. It catered for Europeans, Chinese, part-Europeans, Pacific Islanders and people of other ethnic groups.

IND – Independents or the independent candidates

MV – Matanitu Vanua. This party was formed after the 2000 political crisis and was based mostly in Vanua Levu and northern Tailevu on Viti Levu.

NFP – National Federation Party. A mostly Indo-Fijian political party which was formed in the 1950s.

NLC – Native Land Commission. The institution was established in 1880 by the colonial government as part of the Native Administration. Its initial task was to register and codify all land in Fiji.

NLTB – Native Land Trust Board. It was established in the mid-1940s as a trustee for all indigenous Fijian resources such as land.

NLUP – the New Labour Unity Party was formed in 2001 by Dr. Tupeni Baba and some former members of the Fiji Labour Party.

NVTLP – Nationalist Vanua Tako-Lavo Party. Butadroka's CNP coalesced with the Tako-Lavo Party to form the NVTLP.

PANU – Party of National Unity. This party was formed in the province of Ba in western Viti Levu prior to the 1999 general election.

POTT – Party of the Truth

SDL – Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua. It was formed by current Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase in 2001.

STV – Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua. It was formed in the province of Nadroga/Navosa in 1991 by high chiefs Bulou Eta Vosailagi and Ratu Osea Gavidi.

SVT – Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei. After the demise of the Alliance Party in 1987, the SVT was formed in 1991 by the Great Council of Chiefs to unite all indigenous Fijians. The party was led by 1987 coup-maker, Major General Sitiveni Rabuka.

VLV – Veitokani ni Lewenivanua Vakarisito or the Christian Democrats. A breakaway faction of the SVT, who were members of the Methodist Church formed this party in 1998 as an alternative to the SVT.

WDP – The Western Democratic Party was one of the first Fijian political parties to be formed since the introduction of party politics in Fiji. It was formed by Apisai Tora in western Viti Levu in 1960.

WUF – Western United Front. This party was formed by western Fijian chiefs in 1981 under the leadership of Ratu Osea Gavidi.

GLOSSARY OF FIJIAN WORDS

Adi – honorific title for females of chiefly birth in some regions of Fiji, mostly in eastern and northeastern Fiji, for example, Adi Viti.

Bai Kei Viti (BKV) – “Fiji’s barricade”, a political party which was formed by Apisai Tora in the province of Ba in western Viti Levu after the May 2000 coup.

Batinilovo – the basic family unit or the extended family in Lau and other parts of eastern Fiji.

Biti – the basic family unit or the extended family in western Fiji. In other parts of Fiji “biti” is also known as the “itokatoka” or the “batinilovo”.

Bose - meeting

Bose Levu Vakaturaga (BLV) – The Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) was originally created by the Colonial Administration in 1875 as the Native Council – it was part of the Native Administration, later Fijian Administration. Since 1875, the Council has evolved from “Native Council” to “Council of Chiefs” and now “Great Council of Chiefs”. The BLV sits at the apex of the Fijian Administration. (see also Matanitu iTaukei).

Bose ni Turaga – a council of vanua chiefs which was formed after Rabuka’s 1987 military coups.

Bose vanua – meeting for members of a vanua

Buli – chiefly title in Bua, for example, Buli Dama (Chief of Dama). This traditional title was used by the colonial administration to refer to chiefs who were in charge of districts or vanua in the Matanitu iTaukei or system of indirect rule.

Bulou – honorific title for females of chiefly birth in the various vanua in Kadavu, for example, Bulou Luisa.

Burotukula – a mythical island paradise believed to have been dominated by beautiful Fijian maidens. Fijian mythology relates the appearance and disappearance of the island of Burotukula near Matuku in southern Lau. Fijians refer to the island of Matuku as Burotukula or “the island paradise”.

Eli – Hell. A new word in the Bauan dialect which was created and directly transferred from English by the missionaries after their arrival in 1835 to remind Fijians that there is a hell in the after life where non-Christians and sinners are destined. Most Fijians in this sense converted to Christianity not because that they believed in the new God but that they were frightened of “Eli”. This “fear of the unknown” is also used in party politics by “patrons” (politicians) to maintain their “clients” (voters).

Lala – services rendered to some chiefs by their people. These included food offerings or services provided such as house building or planting of gardens. Lala was also used by the colonial administration in the system of indirect rule as a means of appeasing chiefs in the system. It also alleviated the burden of paying chiefs with money. Some chiefs who traditionally were not entitled to lala enjoyed the service through employment in the system of indirect rule. This became a cause of conflict amongst chiefs (See chapter three).

Lasu – a lie or to tell a lie.

Mata – traditional envoy. In the Matanitu of Kubuna, there were “mata” or envoys to other vanua where traditional links were maintained.

Matanitu – a geopolitical boundary which had evolved in eastern and northeastern Fiji in the late 1700s. In eastern and northeastern Fiji the matanitu was a political construct which comprised of a number of vanua. These vanua were unified under a matanitu by a powerful vanua chief.

Matanitu iTaukei – the Native (later Fijian) Administration which was established in 1875. The institution enabled the imposition of the system of indirect rule within Fijian society.

Mataqali – the sub-clan comprising of one or more extended families or “itokatoka”.

Ovisa ni yasana – the provincial scribe was also a creation of the colonial administration. He worked with the Roko Tui, Buli and the Turaga ni Koro in the Matanitu iTaukei.

Parataisi – paradise; another word which was directly translated from the English language by the missionaries. The promise of “parataisi” or paradise enticed Fijians to convert to Christianity.

Ratu – chiefly title for males in some vanua in eastern Viti Levu and northeastern Fiji, especially in the Matanitu of Kubuna.

Ro – chiefly title for males and females in the various vanua in Rewa and Naitasiri, for example, Ro Ateca or Ro Filipe. Ro is used on males and females of chiefly birth.

Roko – chiefly titles for males and females in Lau, for example, Roko Salote or Roko Alipate.

Roko Tui – traditional chiefly title in some vanua in Tailevu, for example, Roko Tui Namata. It was later used by the colonial administration to refer to the chiefly provincial administrators who were in charge of provinces or yasana.

Soqosoqo iTaukei – the Fijian Association which comprised of the Fijian arm of the Alliance Party.

Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua (STV) – a political party which was formed in the western province of Nadroga/Navosa by high chiefs Bulou Eta Vosailagi and Ratu Osea Gavidia in 1992.

Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT) – the BKV sponsored political party which was formed in 1991 to unite all indigenous Fijians. Major General Sitiveni Rabuka, the 1987 coup-maker became the leader of the party between 1992 and 1999.

Soli ni yasa – a tax imposed on rovers or wanderers. This was a native regulation imposed on Fijians who left their villages and moved around or moved to other places after the demarcation of new boundaries such as the tikina and the yasana by the colonial government.

Soli ni yasana – a tax imposed on all adult males within a province during the time of colonisation.

Talanoa – a story or story telling

Talitali – weaving as in basket weaving.

Tako/Lavo – a type of relationship which was found only amongst the inland tribes on Viti Levu. This includes inland tribes in Ba, Serua, Navosa and certain clans in inland Naitasiri and Wainibuka in Tailevu. It denotes alternating generations, for example, a grandfather (Jione), and his grandson (Tomasi) belong to one generation, “tako” and Jione’s son Bari, and his grandson Dreu belong to another generation Lavo”. These identities strengthen blood ties between alternating generations and promote friendly competitions between those involved.

Tikina – the tikina or district was a colonial creation. Within a province were a number of districts or tikina. Initially, each traditional vanua within a province formed a tikina or district. However, during the 1945 Fijian Administration restructuring, a number of vanua were amalgamated into one district. The number of provinces were reduced from nineteen to fourteen in the process.

Tokatoka – the basic family unit or the extended family in some parts of eastern Fiji.

Tui – the title given to chiefs, as in “Tui Mokani” or chief of Mokani.

Tukuni - legends

Turaga ni Lewa iTaukei – Fijian magistrates, mostly chiefs, who were trained to work in district and provincial courts during the colonial period.

Vanua – a geopolitical entity which was under the control of a powerful chief. In most parts of Fiji, the vanua boundary was well defined at the arrival of Europeans in the early 1800s.

Yasa – a rover or wanderer.

Yasana – refers to provinces. A number of vanua became part of a yasana since 1875. Yasana was a colonial creation and part of the Matanitu iTaukei. The Roko Tui was in charge of the yasana.

Yavusa – the clan. Members of a yavusa claim descent from a legendary founder. The itokatoka, mataqali and yavusa are the cornerstone of the Fijian kinship system.

“Of Roots and Offshoots: Political Thinking, Dissent and the Formation of Fijian Political Parties (1960-1999)”

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

THE FUTURE OF FIJI’S PAST

I realise that the written history of Fiji is but a minute fragment of the lived human experience in the islands. An obvious point, you might say, but this experience underlines it powerfully.¹

The Study

This historical study focuses on Fijian society and narrates the major influences which propelled party politics in the period between 1960 and 1999.² Against a background of imposed unity, diverse social groups resisted this unity through the spontaneous formation of political parties. Using the medium of political parties, this study attempts to analyse the narratives and meta-narratives which historically contributed to Fijian political thinking and dissent, leading to party formation.

An in-depth study of Fijian political parties will highlight the complexities of Fijian society as its members continue traditional forms of rivalries through modern mediums. The introduction of party politics with its process of electioneering has thrown up a continuation of an “intra-Fijian” political rivalry. The formation of political parties and the attempt to win elections can be viewed as a modern means of settling old power rivalries. In this sense, ethnic explanations of the contemporary political dilemmas in Fiji are a small fraction of the whole picture. Lal argues that the 1987 Fijian military coups offered a short-term solution to long and inbuilt contradictions within Fijian society. This needed

¹ Lal, B.V. 1998. *Another Way: The Politics of Constitutional Reform in Post-Coup Fiji*. NCDS Asia Pacific Press, Asia Pacific School of Economics Management, The Australian National University, Canberra: 170.

² Fijian society is comprised of diverse socio-political groups with unique forms of dialects and customs.

to be addressed by the Fijian leadership itself.³ An understanding of Fijian history will illuminate the path that this current study has undertaken.

Fijian history in both its oral and documented sources, has highlighted that power control and overall dominance amongst the many Fijian polities has always been a contested ground. An immediate result of power contest was the continuous shift in the centres of power, beginning at the level of the "itokatoka"⁴, "mataqali"⁵, "yavusa"⁶, "vanua"⁷ and "matanitu"⁸. Ultimately shifts in the balance of power resulted in the rise and decline of powerful chiefdoms such as between Verata and Bau in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Contest for power involved outright politicking;⁹ the building of alliances through the strategic marriage of women of rank to extend socio-political frontiers;¹⁰ and waging wars to extend geo-political boundaries. Power rivalry became more conspicuous and intensive in the early 1800s with the arrival of the different waves of Europeans and the intensification of Tonga's interest in eastern and northeastern Fiji. The competition for power and the attempt to achieve overall dominance in eastern and northeastern Fiji led to cession in 1874 and the imposition of colonial rule for ninety-six years until 1970.

Colonisation not only froze the traditional mediums of power competition but also introduced a new distorted form of socio-political relations through the

³ Lal, B. V. 1992. *Broken Waves: History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century*. Center for Pacific Islands Studies and University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu.

⁴ The most basic extended family unit which is also known as "biti" or "bati ni lovo" in some parts of Fiji. The tokatoka was predominantly patrilineal, however, parts of Fiji like Macuata recognize matrilineal lines.

⁵ The sub-clan which is composed of one or more itokatoka or extended families.

⁶ The clan or yavusa is composed of a number of sub-clans or mataqali.

⁷ A political construct which was unified under a powerful chief. A vanua has a well defined geo-political boundary.

⁸ The matanitu or confederacy was a political construct which existed in parts of eastern and northeastern Fiji by the 1800s.

⁹ The rise of the Bauan chiefdom and the demise of the Verata chiefdom between the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century in eastern Fiji attests to the rise and demise of powerful chiefdoms. Another matanitu in eastern and northeastern Fiji, Tovata, was formed by the Tongan Ma'afu in 1869.

¹⁰ The marriage of women of rank to create political alliances was widely used throughout Fiji prior to cession. However, some powerful chiefdoms or vanua in eastern and northeastern Fiji, like the chiefdom of Bau, used it more than others. Such strategic marriage alliances became useful in times of wars to gather resources for the chiefdom.

“Matanitu iTaukei”¹¹ for its own administrative convenience. The anchorage of colonial power in eastern and northeastern Fiji, where a Polynesian hierarchical type of chiefdom existed, consolidated the traditional basis of power for chiefs in this part of the group. All forms of dissent were suppressed during colonization with the aid of chiefs in the system of indirect rule. When the system of representative government was introduced in 1963, Fijian political power was consolidated in eastern and northeastern Fiji.

Party politics provided an avenue for the revival and expression of once diverse forms of political thinking¹² and dissent¹³ amongst various social groups. Political parties serve as a medium to understand the continuation of the “past”¹⁴ and past practices in the present. While political parties are a modern introduction and promote legal rational philosophy through modern democratic principles, they are undeniably influenced by the experiences of the past.¹⁵ Although such experiences through Fijian cultural practices may seem remote and perhaps insignificant to outsiders, in Fijian political thinking, they powerfully underline and determine the struggle for power in modern Fiji. Within Fijian society political parties serve as modern avenues for the expression of dissent and power competition. Modern achievements through employment in the colonial and post-colonial governments and education have exacerbated power competition as these have extended the normal boundaries for accessing power.¹⁶

¹¹ The Matanitu iTaukei or indirect rule was the Native (later Fijian) Administration which was established in 1875. The system involved the rule of chiefs on their people, mostly those from eastern and northeastern Fiji, on behalf of the colonial state.

¹² In this study political thinking refers to the specific ways in which indigenous Fijians in their diverse social groups conceptualize and express power relations. The diverse forms of Fijian culture imply that there were equally diverse ways of conceptualizing and expressing power relations.

¹³ In this thesis dissent implies going against or opposing an idea or an act. The act of dissension was common in pre-colonial Fiji, perhaps as old as human settlement of the islands. The independent nature of many social groups implied that the attempt to impose power was often met with resistance and dissent.

¹⁴ The “past” in this thesis refers to history.

¹⁵ In this study, Fijian society refers to the diverse social groups which collectively comprise the Fijian race.

¹⁶ Since the beginning of party politics in the 1960s indigenous Fijians have joined non-Fijian political parties like the National Federation Party (NFP) and the Fiji Labour Party (FLP). Apart from expressing modern democratic rights, Fijians who joined non-Fijian political parties were also expressing dissent against the mainstream Fijian political parties and the orthodoxy upon which they were formed.

The Merger: Fijian Political Thinking and European Political Thought

In pre-colonial Pacific societies, political thinking was culture specific and pragmatic. Political thought in the form of the construction of theories as evolved in European societies, did not exist prior to colonization.¹⁷ In Fiji as in other Melanesian societies where power was not consolidated under one ruler for the whole group, political thinking was confined in space and time to numerous geo-political entities. Political thinking reflected the material base of culture in such geo-political boundaries and was expressed in specific languages and dialects with specific customary practices which had evolved since time immemorial. The version of Fijian political thinking which evolved in my vanua for example, was specific to its geo-political boundary and articulated in its unique dialect confined within the boundaries of socio-political and economic relations.

These diverse forms of political thinking became subservient to the new and all encompassing legal rational political thought which was the foundation of the modern state and the centralized government. The Matanitu iTaukei¹⁸ became the foremost institution within the colonial state. Fijian understanding of the modern state and centralized rule was confined to the Matanitu iTaukei and its agents of indirect rule, who were mostly eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs. This institution was a hybrid of some version of the traditional and the modern system of rule. As will be discussed in this study, the regulations of the Matanitu iTaukei became a consistent object of dilemma and dissent amongst Fijians throughout the ninety-six years of colonial rule in Fiji. Such reactions have not only demonstrated the complexity of the merger of the traditional and the modern systems of rule but also highlighted resistance to a neotraditional order which benefited some local groups while it marginalized others. After all the imposition of modern rule did not happen in a vacuum; neither did it replace a monolithic system of rule but it displaced diverse and well-established customary institutions.

¹⁷ See also Helu, I. F. 1994. "Thoughts on Political Systems for the Pacific Islands" in Busch, V. W. et.al (ed). *New Politics in the South Pacific*. Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, Rarotonga and Suva in association with the Pacific Islands Political Studies Association: 319-321.

¹⁸ The Matanitu iTaukei refers to the Native, later, Fijian Administration.

In Fiji, the membership system which was introduced in 1964 to pave the way for elections and party politics, replaced the system of representation through the Executive and Legislative Councils. In retrospect, the major concern with the new political system, was that the majority of the colonized did not understand how it either worked or the rationale behind its introduction. Within Fijian society, colonization prevented once independent members of diverse social groups from actively participating in the political system. The introduction of party politics in the period of decolonisation provided an opportunity for expressing independent political thinking and dissent, an outcome which perhaps, was initially never intended.

From the Matanitu iTaukei to Political Parties

Political parties in the West are a product of hundreds of years of social and political evolution. The disintegration of European monarchies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries paved the way for socio-political and economic reform. In the case of constitutional monarchies like Great Britain, the role of the monarchy had been highly modified to enable a devolution of power to the people. While the monarchy remained, it operated mostly as a figurehead and could no longer interfere with the daily operation of the modern state. Party politics in the west therefore emerged as a consequence of the evolution of the socio-political and economic system. The main role of a political party, as understood in the modern state context, is to collect, process and articulate the wants and demands of people in the promotion of modern democracy.¹⁹ This implies that people have given up some of their rights to be protected by the state and the state in return looks after the collective rights of the people.

In Fiji when party politics was introduced in the 1960s, the influence of colonial political arrangements was pervasive. Within Fijian society, the formation of the Fijian Association or "Soqosoqo iTaukei"²⁰ on February 18, 1956 indicated a number of things. First, was the powerful influence of the eastern and northeastern chiefly elites, who were closely connected with the Matanitu iTaukei in the formation of the Fijian Association. Second, was the general level of ignorance which Fijians had in terms of understanding party politics, let alone

¹⁹ See Ball, A. R. and Peters, G. Y. 2000. *Modern Politics and Government* (6th ed). Macmillan, London: 96-102.

²⁰ The Fijian Association became the Fijian arm of the Alliance Party in 1966.

the overall modern political system. Between 1904 and the Legislative Council election in 1963, Fijian members of the Legislative Council were appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Native Council (later Council of Chiefs). The first direct experience that Fijians had in terms of determining and voting for their political representatives was through the introduction of party politics.

Inevitably, the nature of Fijian political parties which started to emerge in the early 1960s did not only reflect colonial political arrangements but also the natural social cleavages within Fijian society. As already mentioned, the party system provided an opportunity for the re-emergence of old forms of political thinking and dissent as new parties were being formed. While the formation of the Fijian Association²¹ arm of the Alliance Party in eastern Fiji used the structure of the Matanitu iTaukei to define its political power base, those which were formed in western Viti Levu were individual efforts or localized in a few vanua, reflecting the egalitarian nature of the western Fijian polity.²²

Fijian political parties have demonstrated that beneath the democratic competition for power through elections is the more powerful inter-play of traditional political forces, which attempt to influence the outcome of elections and determine who should control political power in Fiji. The Fijian military

²¹ The Fijian Association which was formed in 1956 was an indigenous Fijian political organisation. Two of its main architects were Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna and Sir Maurice Scott. The organization emerged out of the version of the traditional Fijian socio-political system upon which the Matanitu iTaukei or the Native (later Fijian) administration was founded. It was based mostly on the socio-political hierarchy found in eastern Fiji. The organisation was formed to safeguard a few issues that, the mostly eastern Fijian chiefly elite believed as important to enable the political supremacy of indigenous Fijians. These included the maintenance of the existing hierarchy of chiefly authority; the preservation of the link with the British Crown; safeguarding Fijian land ownership; and to act as the voice of indigenous Fijians in any negotiation with the British regarding pre-independence Constitutional changes. See also Alley, R. 1986. "The Emergence of Party Politics" in *Politics in Fiji*, Lal, B.V. (ed). Allen & Unwin, Sydney: 31.

²² See chapters 4 - 7 for the different trends in the formation of political parties in western and eastern Fiji.

coups of 1987²³ and George Speight's civilian coup of 2000²⁴ attest to this orientation. Fijian political parties since the 1960s have not only been formed through traditional alliances but have also served to strengthen the existence of such alliances. Even newly formed political parties like the "Matanitu Vanua" have exhibited such a trend.²⁵ Fijian political parties in this perspective were more than organizations which represented and promoted modern democracy. They also become mediums for expressing alternative views of history, a means for expressing dissent or strengthening socio-political alliances.

Significance of the Study

Since the formation of the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party, there has been a consistent attempt by the ruling Fijian chiefly elites, mostly in eastern and northeastern Fiji to unite Fijians politically under one grand Fijian political party. At first it was the Alliance Party, formed in 1966 and led by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. The defeat of the Alliance Party in 1987 led to the execution of two military coups and thereafter, the promulgation of the 1990 Constitution and the creation of yet another grand Fijian political party, the "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei" (SVT), in 1991 to replace the Alliance party. However, efforts to unite Fijians under a grand Fijian political party have not gone unchallenged from within Fijian society. Since the 1960s and more so after 1987, there has been continuous party formation throughout Fiji.

Spontaneous party formation between 1960 and 1999 opens a window through which to view how traditional forms of politicking through rivalries and dissent are conceptualised through modern mediums. Political parties in different regions reflect natural social cleavages and socio-political evolution. While on the one hand it may be argued that the formation of political parties in general is facilitated by the introduction of liberal democracy, on the other, distinct characteristics such as the regional nature of party formation, regular name

²³ The Fijian military coup de e'tat of 1987 was widely viewed as the "Tovata" coup, although it was excused as an attempt to prevent possible civil uprising between the two main ethnic groups and to return political leadership to all Fijian chiefs. The question to ask is "which Fijian chiefs benefited and from which part(s) of Fiji did they come?"

²⁴ The coup of 2000 was mostly the work of members of the Kubuna Confederacy in association with members of various vanua in Bua, Cakaudrove, and Macuata. All these uprisings were centered in eastern Fiji.

²⁵ The "Matanitu Vanua" party was formed in 2001 by those who had supported George Speight's coup of 2000. The party was founded on the traditional support of some vanua in Fiji.

change, as well as spontaneity in party formation in spite of the similarities of needs and objectives, require an in-depth study and analysis.

This study of Fijian political parties is in the contemporary period and attempts to understand Fijian political thinking and dissent. Additionally it illuminates how the past still influences the present. However, versions of the past are many and varied in Fijian society and these are reflected in the nature of the formation of political parties since the 1960s and particularly in the period between 1987 and 2001.²⁶

In explaining factors which led to the formation of many Fijian political parties between 1960 and 1999, Baba states that:

It reflects the fact that we Fijians were not politically united in the pre-colonial period. We earned our loyalty to our vanua, then later in the colonial period, to our provinces too. Our disunity manifests itself when we try to unite politically, but there are various levels of loyalty to go through²⁷

Fijian political parties, therefore, are “offshoots” of Fijian “roots” or Fijian history, which in this study is considered as the total of lived human experience, regulated by custom and tradition which are transmitted from one generation to another. Since the 1960s, party formation has displayed power rivalries in the context of regions, vanua, matanitu, and even amongst different social classes of Fijians. There is rivalry between chiefs and commoners, chiefs and people of one region against another such as east versus west, rural versus urban dwellers and even rivalry between different social classes.

The formation of different political parties in different regions of Fiji has, as I shall argue in the thesis, exemplified traditional loyalties and competing legitimacies.²⁸ The first and only successful endeavour at Fijian political unity through party politics was that attempted by the Alliance Party under the leadership of Fiji’s first and longest serving Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese

²⁶ The Fiji Elections Office records a total of more than forty political parties between 1960 and 2001.

²⁷ Interview with Professor Tupeni Baba, February 8, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

²⁸ Max Weber identified three ideological bases of legitimacy. These are “traditional”, “charismatic” and “legal-rational”. In the context of Fijian political history and party politics, legitimacy is an amalgamation of all the three, that is, traditional, charismatic and legal-rational, i.e., an extension of colonial modernity.

Mara.²⁹ Whilst Mara earned the prime ministership through merit, in Fijian political thinking, it was not so much his qualification that mattered; rather, he was first and foremost, a Fijian chief from the Vuanirewa clan in Lakeba in the “Matanitu of Tovata”.³⁰ His assuming power was a traditional victory for his vanua and matanitu. What the Matanitu of Tovata could not achieve in pre-colonial Fiji, that is, to exert overall political power throughout the group, Mara was able to achieve through his modern education and by becoming prime minister. Mara’s long term leadership was later a source of internal contradiction within Fijian society as his control was viewed with suspicion by Fijians from other vanua and matanitu.³¹ Rivalry and dissent directly reflected the diversity of traditional Fijian socio-political culture.

Mara’s control of the Fiji government and Fijian party politics from 1967 to 1987 was viewed with suspicion by chiefs and other members of the Fijian society outside of his province, Lau. Speculation was rife amongst members of the indigenous Fijian society about Ratu Mara’s role in the 1987 military coups after he was nominated as prime minister in the post-1987 Military Government. Sitiveni Rabuka himself has testified to this in his biography.³² Twelve of the fifteen members of Rabuka’s Interim Council, formed after the May 1987 coup, including Mara, were former Alliance Party members.³³ Mara became President of Fiji through the nomination of the Great Council of Chiefs after the death of Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau in 1992 and remained in this position until the political upheaval of May 19, 2000.³⁴

Amongst indigenous Fijians, the George Speight-led upheaval of 2000 threw up an array of factors which ranged from a re-kindling of the “Taukei” nationalist sentiments to vanua and matanitu rivalry. The unceremonial dismissal of Mara

²⁹ Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara is the high chief of Lau, a group of islands in eastern Fiji. He was amongst the first group of eastern Fijian chiefs, who had a special place in Fiji’s colonial hierarchy. He was Oxford educated and served as Chief Minister from 1967 to 1972 and Prime Minister from 1972 to 1987.

³⁰ The “Matanitu of Tovata” or the Tovata Confederacy is one of the three existing traditional Matanitu in eastern Fiji. The other two are Kubuna and Burebasaga. See chapter 3 for an explanation of the formation of Matanitu.

³¹ See chapter 3 on “Sukuna and the Making of Mara”.

³² See Sharpham, J. 2000. *Rabuka of Fiji: The Authorised Biography of Major General Sitiveni Rabuka*. Central Queensland University Press, Queensland: 104-109.

³³ See Sharpham, J. 2000: 115.

³⁴ Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara passed away in April, 2004.

as President of Fiji during the 2000 coup was an indirect way of removing him from modern power control which for a long while had concurrently strengthened his traditional power base. Over the years Mara's political dominance had been likened to a banyan tree beneath which there was no undergrowth. His removal by the leaders of the Fiji Police Force and the Fiji Military Forces, was an attempt to avert a plot against him by the coup-makers, most of whom were from the "Matanitu of Kubuna" or the Kubuna Confederacy in eastern Viti Levu. From the early twentieth century until 2000, politics in Fiji had been dominated by three powerful chiefs from Kubuna and Tovata. These were Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, in the early twentieth century, Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna in the mid-twentieth century and Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara in the later half to the end of the twentieth century.³⁵

The Problem and its Significance

The influence of traditional Fijian politics on modern politics has not been researched nor fully understood by many scholars of Fijian history and politics. A number of scholars analyse Fiji's political crisis purely in ethnic terms. Others recognize the role of the past in contemporary Fijian politics, but do not really understand its depth and cannot explain the extent of its influence. While some explain party politics in neo-Marxist terms, the plural society theorists explain ethnic cleavages in party formation as a natural tendency since they argue that all races are physically and culturally different.

This study however, introduces a new perspective to an understanding of Fijian political history through the medium of political parties. The period under study, 1960 to 1999, provides a snapshot of how Fijian political thinking and dissent have been articulated through party formation. The narrative of the rise and decline of the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy, continuing the trend in the rise and demise of powerful chiefdoms, was extended through party politics. The eastern and northeastern Fijian orthodoxy evolved in eastern and northeastern Fiji with the rise of Bau and the eclipse of Verata in the late

³⁵ The legacy on chiefly as well as modern leadership left behind by of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna (former Tui Nayau and Tui Lau) and Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara (current Tui Nayau and Tui Lau) shows the new trend of assimilating both the traditional and the modern. Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, Ratu Sukuna's father, was perhaps, the first Fijian chief in the early colonial period to have realised the important place of education in contemporary chiefly leadership. He passed this legacy to Sukuna and Mara. See chapter 4.

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It was a belief system which was strengthened after the arrival of the missionaries in 1835 to promote and justify the existence of “cultural homogeneity” within indigenous Fijian society. External interference in the eastern and northeastern Fijian rivalries contributed to the final emergence of the chiefdom of Bau as the most dominant power in eastern and northeastern Fiji at the end of the eighteenth century. This claim was affirmed by the missionaries since 1835 and the foundation of a symbiotic relationship between the Church and the Chiefly institution with Bau at the apex. Bau’s claim was further consolidated by British colonization in 1874 and its assumption that Bau was the leading vanua throughout Fiji. A neat monocultural hierarchy, with Bau at its apex was assumed to have been an all-encompassing trend throughout Fiji. The orthodoxy was consequently legitimized on the trinity of “Vanua (land and all its resources), Lotu (Christianity) and Matanitu (the colonial government and state)”, with Bau as the leading chiefdom. The foundation of this trinity was the basis of the myth of cultural homogeneity, a claim which later facilitated and legitimized the formation of the Matanitu iTaukei and Bauan dominance in the system of indirect rule. The myth of cultural homogeneity was a social construction and an attempt to fossilize the once dynamic chiefly institution in Fiji.

This thesis argues that the formation of the “Soqosoqo iTaukei” or the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party in 1956 continued and extended the promotion of the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy.³⁶ In this context, parties like the Alliance and the Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei were more than mediums for democratic representation, they were founded and propelled by powerful influences of the past. Likewise, parties which emerged in other regions of Fiji were equally influenced by influences of the past.

A critical approach to the study of Fijian political history is adopted in this study. Between 1960 and 1999 Fijian political history can be analysed through the

³⁶ The claim of “cultural homogeneity” and the supremacy of the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy has been refuted by Fijian historians and by indigenous Fijians in different vanua and matanitu. See also Derrick, R. A. 1946. *Fijian History* (vol. 1), Government Printing Press, Colony of Fiji; Routledge, D. 1985. *Matanitu: The Struggle for Power in Early Fiji*. Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji; Baleiwaqa, T. 2003. *Rerevaka na Kalou ka Doka na Tui: Fear God and Honour the King*. PhD Thesis. The Australian National University.

dialectics of unity and disunity. In Fijian party politics, the attempt to unify had simultaneously been negated by the attempt to diversify. While the argument for the need to unify all indigenous Fijians politically became a consistent and powerful one since 1987, Fijians however, were simultaneously involved in political activities which highlighted the expression of independent political thinking and dissent. The guiding premise of this dissertation is the question, "why and how did this happen and what were and are its future implications?".

This study focuses at the "intra-Fijian" level or at the micro-level of Fijian society to try and explain contemporary Fijian political problems. In this study Fijian political problems are viewed as structural in nature. They reflect the diverse nature of the cultures and society out of which they have emerged. Koht argues that:

Society has its own morality, which inevitably demands more or less uniformity. The individual and society may come into conflict, but even the nature of this conflict is determined by the society within which it occurs. Society irresistibly shapes its individual members according to its own laws.³⁷

Fijian political problems also reflect the outside influences which have attempted to shape these cultures, and hence the individual and group reactions to these changes. Fijian reaction in the form of political destabilization and ambitious party formation is an attempt to make sense of all the changes taking place and to redefine themselves and their place in history in a world whose rate of change they can no longer control.

In their attempt to maintain modern political control through elections, some resort to historical re-interpretations of what they assume as past realities while others attack the easiest targets, the later immigrants. This study analyses the problem through Fijian political history, i.e., from pre-colonial political rivalry to the establishment of the colonial state and the maintenance of a new political reality in the post-colonial period. Pre-colonial power competition and colonial power re-arrangements surfaced in the nature of party politics between 1960 and 1999. The political party as a modern political organization which has

³⁷ Koht, H. 1970. "Driving Forces in History" in *The Dimensions of History* in Guinsburg, T. N. (ed). Rand MacNally, Chicago: 83.

created the conditions of possibility for citizens to express and participate in the modern polity, is the only organization which has fully exhibited a combination of many versions of Fijian ethos in which Fijian political thinking and dissent can be studied.

Thesis Outline

This dissertation comprises eight chapters which have been further divided into three parts. Part one constitutes the introduction.

Part two contains two background chapters on Fijian socio-political history. Chapter two focuses on traditional socio-political structures in western and eastern Fiji. This chapter also discusses the political implications of historical events in Fiji and in particular eastern Fiji, where its particular forms of traditional political systems have emerged to dominate overall Fijian politics since the 1800s. Outside contact such as those with shipwrecked sailors, beachcombers and missionaries are considered as pivotal in shaping contemporary Fijian political history. Much of this outside contact occurred in eastern and northeastern Fiji since the early 1800s and it consequently influenced contemporary political change in these parts of the group.

Chapter three discusses the role of the modern state in consolidating the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy which had emerged since cession in 1874. This was enabled by the formation of the Native Administration or the Matanitu iTaukei consolidation through Indirect rule. The opportunity of acquiring a new form of "legitimacy"³⁸ influenced the emergence of powerful eastern Fijian chiefs such as Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi.³⁹ Others, such as Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna and Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara followed suit. The emergence and dominance of some powerful eastern and northeastern chiefs in Fiji's politics since 1874 did not only continue the trend in the rise and decline of powerful leaders, but more importantly, the rise and decline of powerful chiefdoms.

³⁸ Max Weber identified three ideological bases of legitimacy which are traditional, charismatic and legal-rational. In traditional societies where leadership was founded on traditional legitimacy, colonization and contact with European civilization introduced another form of legitimacy which was legal rational. In the case of Fiji, a number of eastern Fijian chiefs were able to extend their political power through the acquisition civil service jobs which were founded on legal rational legitimacy.

³⁹ Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi was a high chief of Bau who was considered by the colonial government as a most trustworthy Fijian administrator in the Matanitu iTaukei in the early 20th century. His son Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna was to follow in his footsteps.

Part three focuses on the four decades of the introduction and practice of party politics within Fijian society between 1960 and 1999. The four chapters discuss the thinking and role of dissent in the formation of Fijian political parties through the different regions of Fiji. Chapter four focuses on the period between 1960 and 1972 with the introduction of party politics and the formation of Fijian parties in only two major regions, eastern and western Viti Levu. Mara, following in the footsteps of his close relatives and predecessors, Madraiwiwi and Sukuna, became the leader of the eastern and northeastern--based Alliance Party which ruled Fiji between 1967 and 1987. The chapter also highlights the formation of western-based Fijian political parties which emerged even prior to the formation of the Alliance Party.

Chapter five covers the period between 1973 and 1987. This thesis considers this period constituting one of the most active political challenges and dissent against the eastern and northeastern-based Alliance Party of Ratu Mara. Three political parties, the Fijian Nationalist Party (FNP), the Western United Front (WUF), and the Fiji Labour Party (FLP), emerged during this period, causing two electoral defeats for the Alliance Party. The challenge posed by the FNP, WUF and FLP were more than electoral defeats for the Alliance Party. A leadership change implied a challenge to the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy to which many leaders in the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party subscribed and believed were rightfully theirs historically. This becomes problematic as versions of history and traditional leadership become a contested ground when seen through the lenses of party-makers.

Chapter six covers the period between 1988 and 1991. Fiji had its first coup d'état on 14 May 1987, a month after the defeat of the Alliance Party by the Fiji Labour Party and National Federation Party Coalition. A second coup was executed in September of 1987 by Major General Sitiveni Rabuka, the executor of the first coup. The military coups led to the overthrow of the 1970 Constitution and the promulgation of the 1990 Constitution. This paved the way for a new electoral system as well as the formation of a new mainstream and eastern northeastern-based Fijian political party to replace the Alliance Party. Rabuka became the leader of the newly formed "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei"

(SVT) Party which was formed through the endorsement of the "Bose Levu Vakaturaga" (BLV) or Council of Chiefs. A new constitution enabled the return of political power to the eastern and northeastern political elites. However, the fragmentation of the orthodoxy which supported the hegemony had already begun.

The period between 1992 and 1999 is the main focus of Chapter seven. It does not only highlight the reign of the SVT Party under Rabuka but also the numerous challenges to the SVT through the formation of new Fijian political parties. Endorsement by the Bose Levu Vakaturaga did not make the SVT a widely accepted Fijian political party. Within the SVT, cracks began early, resulting in the formation of another Fijian political party, the Fijian Association, in 1993. Such consistent challenge finally led to the defeat of the SVT Party during the general election in 1999. This closed yet another era of Fijian party formation which had been instigated "from above". Exactly a year after the defeat of the SVT by the Fiji Labour Party People's Coalition, George Speight executed Fiji's third coup. Alternative party formation continued thereafter.

Chapter eight gives a summary and an overview of Fijian party politics. It discusses the major trends in Fijian party formation which have emerged in the period under study and possible implications of these.

Literature Review

A plethora of published literature on Fiji's politics and political development have emerged since the 1950s. However, this review specifically focuses on literature which contribute to the Fijian political discourse of party politics and the influence of political thinking and dissent in the formation of Fijian political parties. Three categories of published literature have informed this study: those which discuss Fijian political thinking and dissent, those which generally discuss the impact of colonial changes within Fijian society and those which analyze political parties or party politics in general using mostly the plural thesis approach, the neo-Marxist tradition or a combination of both.

A number of scholars such as J. Nation (1978)⁴⁰, A. Mamak (1978)⁴¹, Lal, B. V.(1986)⁴², N. Thomas (1990)⁴³, R. Norton (1990)⁴⁴, M. C. Howard (1991)⁴⁵, S. Lawson (1991)⁴⁶, W. Sutherland (1992)⁴⁷, I. F. Helu. (1994),⁴⁸ and R. Robertson and W. Sutherland (2002)⁴⁹, have recognized the influence of the past, in terms of history and culture on a society or country's political system.

Helu explains that in pre-contact Pacific societies, political thinking was very much practical and confined to specific boundaries, was culturally determined and regulated by the need for group survival.⁵⁰ In the post-contact period, political thinking as a form of indigenous knowledge has influenced the modern political system. Nation, referring to Fijian politics, recognizes the crucial role that culture contributes in shaping Fiji's political system. He argued that:

One of the things that everybody knows but cannot quite think how to demonstrate is that a country's politics reflect the design of its culture.⁵¹

Thomas, however, further elaborated on the influence of Fijian culture in Fiji's politics by stating that:

⁴⁰ Nation, J. 1978. *Customs of Respect: The Traditional Basis of Fijian Politics*. Development Studies Centre, Monograph No. 14, The Australian National University, Canberra.

⁴¹ Mamak, A. 1978. *Colour, Culture and Conflict: A Study of Pluralism in Fiji*. Pergamon Press, New South Wales, Australia.

⁴² Lal, B. V. 1986. "Politics Since Independence: Continuity and Change, 1970-1982" in *Politics Since Independence*, Lal, B. V. (ed). The Institute of Polynesian Studies, Brigham Young University, Hawaii: 74-106.

⁴³ Thomas, N. "Regional Politics, Ethnicity and Customs in Fiji" in *The Contemporary Pacific: A Journal of Island Affairs*. Vol.2 (1), Spring 1990.

⁴⁴ Norton, R. 1990. (2nd ed). *Race and Class in Fiji*. University of Queensland, Australia.

⁴⁵ Howard, M. C. 1991. *Fiji: Race and Politics in an Island State*. University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

⁴⁶ Lawson, S. 1991. *The Failure of Democratic Politics in Fiji*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

⁴⁷ Sutherland, W. 1992. *Beyond the Politics of Race: An Alternative History of Fiji to 1992*. Political and Social Change Monograph 15. Department of Political and Social Change, The Australian National University.

⁴⁸ Helu, I. F. 1994. "Thoughts on Political Systems for the Pacific Islands" in *New Politics in the South Pacific*, Busch, W. V. (ed). Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Rarotonga and Suva in association with the Pacific Islands Political Studies Association: 319-330.

⁴⁹ Robertson, R. and Sutherland, W. 2001. *Government by the Gun: The Unfinished Business of Fiji's 2000 Coup*. Pluto Press, Australia.

⁵⁰ Helu, 1994: 319.

⁵¹ Nation, J. 1978: 2.

The analysis of "the east – west divide" begins with social diversity in pre-colonial Fiji: it is pointed out in the small islands constituting the centre and east of Fiji, hierarchical tribal confederations had developed, whose high chiefs later became closely involved with the colonial administration (and who in fact still dominate the conservative side of Fiji party politics) – while the interior and west of Viti Levu, traditional political leadership was far more localized.⁵²

On this note Howard added that:

An understanding of modern Fijian politics requires a careful look at Fiji's past – both the objective past, and the idealized past... There are in a sense two interwoven layers of these pasts. The first layer consist of a pre-colonial Fiji objectively comprised of differing regional traditions, warring chiefdoms and confederacies... The legacies of past alliances and rivalries have remained an important feature in Fijian politics, as has the use of traditional lore.⁵³

Norton further emphasizes the impact of traditional Fijian structures in the direction and nature of Fijian politics by arguing:

The emphasis I gave to regional differences and inequalities was to some extent vindicated by the significance of old resentments of Fijians of western Viti Levu towards Fijians of the east during the elections and the military coups of 1987. Indeed one of the main consequences of the military intervention has been the strengthening of an eastern Fijian hegemony that has its roots in pre-colonial times and was consolidated under colonial rule. The regional divisions and jealousies continue to be a powerful force in the present crisis, not just between west and east but perhaps more importantly now between the main island of Viti Levu and the eastern islands.⁵⁴

Mamak reiterates Norton's explanation in his analysis of the regional nature of Fijian party politics as it emerged in the early 1960s. While he recognises the existence of "natural social cleavages" within Fijian society, he however, cannot link these natural social cleavages to earlier movements like Nawai's Viti Kabani and other social movements like the Bula Tale in Nadroga as part of dissent. He equates such social movements as reactions against the dictatorial leadership within the Fijian Administration.⁵⁵ Lawson corroborates Mamak's recognition of the diverse nature of Fijian society and links the failure of democratic politics in

⁵² Thomas, N. "Regional Politics, Ethnicity and Customs in Fiji" in *The Contemporary Pacific: A Journal of Island Affairs*. Vol.2 (1), Spring 1990: 133.

⁵³ Howard, M.C. 1991. *Fiji: Race and Politics in an Island State*. University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver:14.

⁵⁴ Norton, R. 1990: xi.

⁵⁵ Mamak, A. 1978. *Colour, Culture and Conflict: A Study of Pluralism in Fiji*. Pergamon Press, Australia: 144-146.

Fiji with the plural society syndrome in which the myth of cultural homogeneity is used to promote the leadership and interests of the eastern chiefs. Additionally, the plural society syndrome was used to strengthen the adoption of a party system based on race. While Lawson has recognized that the version of the plural society syndrome in Fiji was sustained⁵⁶ by the primacy of the idea of indigenous Fijian interest and that of cultural homogeneity, this study extends this claim through an in depth analysis of the dynamics of cultural homogeneity, asking the questions of the conditions of its emergence and the reasons for maintaining such structures.

Sutherland further corroborated the role of Fijian culture on contemporary Fijian politics by stating that:

The critical struggles in post-coup Fiji are intra-Fijian struggles. The key lines of tensions are now between chiefs, between tribes, and between commoners and chiefs, eastern and western Fijians, and urban and rural Fijians. Within the trade union movement and the Church Fijians are also divided...clearly the intra-Fijian conflicts need to be explained in terms other than race...It is clear the origins of these conflicts do not lie just in the post-coup situation. Instead the conflicts are rooted in structural tensions which lie deep in Fiji's history...There is a hidden history which needs to be recovered.⁵⁷

Lal also discusses the competition amongst Fiji's political parties between 1970 and 1982. On Fijian political parties, he explained that the Fijian Association was the backbone of the Alliance and that Fijians' overwhelming support for the party contributed to its success from 1966. In discussing competition between the Alliance Party and other Fijian parties, Lal has also alluded to the reaffirmation of western Fijian interests by Ratu Osea Gavidi's Western United Front Party. While Lal discusses the competition provided by Fijian parties such as Viliame Savu's Fiji Independent Party, Sakeasi Butadroka's Fijian Nationalist Party, and Ratu Osea Gavidi's Western United Front, his reading about this competition has a slightly different orientation from this study which historically looks at the role of Fijian political thinking and dissent in Fijian society and link these with party formation between 1960 and 1999.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Lawson, S. 1991. *The Failure of Democratic Politics in Fiji*. Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1-11.

⁵⁷ Sutherland, W. 1992. *Beyond the Politics of Race: An Alternative History of Fiji to 1992*. Political and Social Change Monograph 15. Department of Political and Social Change, The Australian National University: 2.

⁵⁸ See Lal, B. V. 1986: 90-99.

Robertson and Sutherland (2001) also follow the same line of argument as Norton and Lal in acknowledging that Fijian society is beset with long and deep-seated contradictions which can be traced back in history. In explaining the events during the May 2000 civilian coup in Fiji, they argue that:

The unexpected confusion was not simply the product of opportunism or the unforeseen... Behind these features lay deeper tensions whose origins go back to Fiji's colonial past.⁵⁹

Perhaps what is missing from this explanation is how to specifically locate the root of the problem in the past.

While the above scholars have rightly indicated the role of Fijian political thinking and hence culture and traditional socio-political structures in shaping and influencing contemporary politics in Fiji, this study aims to extend their thesis and historicize this particular relationship.

Given that there are natural social cleavages within Fijian society, what exacerbated rivalry and dissent since cession have been colonial policies which involved the pacification and unification of Fijians under the colonial state. The demarcation of new boundaries and the creation of new institutions of rule such as the Matanitu iTaukei has influenced the Fijian way of life in a number of significant ways. By 1880 a major way of achieving unity was through the codification of the land tenure system under the Native Land Commission (NLC). As explained by France (1969)⁶⁰, this was a complicated task since the landholding system differed throughout Fiji. Initially Fijians defied the new system, as France explained:

Whilst in village life the system is ignored or evaded wherever possible, it is at the national level, landed and defended as being at the very foundation of Fijian social order. Leading Fijian politicians are publicly committed to its preservation inviolate against mounting pressure for change from an Indian population which now exceeds that of the Fijians and in numbers and economic strength. The government itself has attempted to stimulate the flagging agricultural economy of Fijians by urging that the system which it imposed be made more flexible. But the system has become hallowed and sacrosanct.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Robertson, R. and Sutherland, W. 2001: xvii.

⁶⁰ See France, P. 1969. *The Charter of the Land: Custom and Colonization in Fiji*. Oxford University Press, London.

⁶¹ France, P. 1969: 174.

The codification of land in Fiji developed its own internal dynamics and introduced a number of new developments in Fijian society. In the process the adoption of the larger social unit, mataqali, instead of the smaller extended family unit, itokatoka, as the landowning unit, introduced a more communal way of land holding and land use. Much of the initial demands of the colonial government, such as in the provisions for Gordon's "Produce Tax System"⁶² which was introduced in 1875, for instance, required communal effort and was necessitated by the new communal land ownership system. The new land tenure system promoted the social construction of communalism amongst Fijian. Land and its new conceptualization has influenced political thinking in various ways. Its commodification and lease system has been a controversial issue within Fijian society as members of a landowning unit receive different amounts of monetary rewards. This study further explores how the attempt to impose unity by changing the land tenure system contributed to protests and dissent. Macnaught, T. J. (1982)⁶³ explicitly analyses the impact of the Fijian Administration or Matanitu iTaukei on indigenous Fijians in its attempt to impose new rules and regulations on Fijians. Dissent against the system was a direct result of the new socio-political changes which resulted in the elevation in social statuses of some chiefs who were employed in the system. Additionally, the observation of strict regulations led to overall Fijian economic marginalisation such that by the 1950s, the developmentalist writers commented on the need to reform the Fijian Administration and the need to introduce new measures to enable Fijian economic development.

Developmentalist scholars such as O.H.K. Spate (1959)⁶⁴, Sir Alan Burns

⁶² Durutalo, A. L. 1997. Provincialism and the Crisis of Indigenous Fijian Political Unity. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. School of Social and Economic Development, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji: 97-100.

⁶³ Macnaught, T. J. 1982. *The Fijian Colonial Experience: A Study of the Neotraditional Order Under British Colonial Rule Prior to World War II*. Pacific Research Monograph Number Seven, The Australian National University, Canberra.

⁶⁴ Spate, O.H.K. Legislative Council Paper No.13 of 1959. *The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects*. Legislative Council of Fiji.

(1960)⁶⁵, C.S. Belshaw (1964)⁶⁶, and R. F. Watters (1969)⁶⁷, have generally argued that the policy imposed on Fijians during the period of colonization had an impact on the Fijian way of life. D. L. Horowitz (1985)⁶⁸ has also analysed how various dimensions of ethnic conflicts in former colonies, including Fiji, have emerged out of colonial policy.

Pacification and unity under the colonial state was a foremost task since 1874. The developmentalist writers, in general argued for the reform or outright abolition of the Fijian Administration as they saw it as a major barrier to Fijian economic development. Spate, the leading proponent within this group, was generally of the view that the Fijian Administration, as a socio-political construct had been a stumbling block to Fijian economic and political development.⁶⁹ This is in terms of the rigidity of the control of its institutions, which on the whole could not create innovative development policies on land and other Fijian owned resources for the benefit of all Fijian people. In highlighting the need to introduce reformative measures within the institution to enable economic development for indigenous Fijians, Spate was simultaneously posing a direct challenge to vested political interests within the institution. Perhaps, Ali's (1986)⁷⁰ analysis on the foundation of the Fijian Administration explains the complexity and difficult task of attempting to reform the institution. Ali highlighted that the boundary of colonial policy laid down at Cession such as the special protection of the Fijian people became a major reasoning for the establishment of the Fijian Administration. Such policy, taken with others such as the non-alienation of Fijian land and the non-commercial employment of

⁶⁵ Burns, Sir Alan. *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Natural Resources and Population Trends of the Colony of Fiji 1959: Statement of Government Policy on the Recommendations of the Burns Commission*. Council Paper No. 1 of 1960. Legislative Council of Fiji.

⁶⁶ Belshaw, C.S. 1964. *Under the Ivi Tree: Society and Economic Growth in Rural Fiji*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

⁶⁷ Watters, R.F. 1969. *Koro: Economic Development and Social Change in Fiji*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

⁶⁸ Horowitz, D. L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

⁶⁹ In this thesis and in the context of Fijian economic development, economic development refers to modern economic innovations through policies which guide people to make use of their resources as both a source of long-term income and to give Fijians a sense of partnership, ownership and identity with government's economic policies.

In this thesis Fijian political development refers to the development of institutions, attitudes and values which form the Fijian political power system to not only embrace modern changes but to accept changes which are beneficial to indigenous Fijians and non-Fijian citizens.

⁷⁰ Ali, A. 1986. "Fiji: Political Change, 1874-1960" in *Politics in Fiji*, Lal, B. V. (ed). The Institute for Polynesian Studies, Brigham Young University, Hawaii.

Fijians, became the foundation of the Fijian Administration.⁷¹ Horowitz has also explicitly argued how various dimensions of ethnic conflicts have emerged out of colonial policy, even long after colonization, since normally colonial structures remained after the colonialists had long departed.⁷² While Horowitz, in reference to Fiji has alluded to the impact of colonial policy on indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian relations, this study will extend this boundary to also focus on the impact of colonial policy within and amongst members of ethnic Fijians. Colonial policy has exacerbated dissent amongst indigenous Fijians.

These interests have grown and consolidated over the years since the establishment of the Matanitu iTaukei. This study argues that the Matanitu iTaukei was not created for development but for social control and it was perhaps ambitious, of the developmentalist writers to suggest a review for the institution. Additionally, this study will show that roots of dissent which was later expressed through party politics had also resulted from the oppressive power within the institution.

Another group of scholars whose work has contributed to party politics in Fiji have also broadly illuminated the path that this study takes. They explain the Fijian political discourse in terms of the plural thesis approach, the neo-Marxist tradition or a combination of both. These include: R. R. Premdas (1980)⁷³, S. Durutalo (1986)⁷⁴, R. Alley (1986)⁷⁵, W Sutherland (1992)⁷⁶, B.V. Lal (1992)⁷⁷, S. Lawson (1991)⁷⁸, Nayacakalou (1975)⁷⁹, Ravuvu (1983, 1985), D. Scarr (1988)⁸⁰,

⁷¹ Ali, A. 1986: 1-27.

⁷² See Horowitz, D. L. 1985: 5-6, 9, 109, 127, 157, 173, 579.

⁷³ Premdas, R. R. 1980. "Constitutional Challenge: The Rise of Fijian Nationalism" in *Pacific Perspectives*, Vol. 9 (2). South Pacific Social Science Association, Suva, Fiji: 30-44.

⁷⁴ Durutalo, S. 1986. *The Paramountcy of Fijian Interest and the Politicization of Ethnicity*, South Pacific Forum Working Paper No. 6. The University of the South Pacific Sociological Society, School of Social and Economic Development, Suva, Fiji.

⁷⁵ Alley, R. 1986. "The Emergence of Party Politics" in *Politics in Fiji*, Lal, B. V. (ed). Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

⁷⁶ Sutherland, W. 1992. *Beyond the Politics of Race: An Alternative History of Fiji to 1992*. Australian National University, Canberra.

⁷⁷ Lal, B.V. 1992. *Broken Waves: History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century*. Centre for Pacific Island Studies and University of Hawaii, Honolulu.

⁷⁸ Lawson, S. 1991. *The Failure of Democratic Politics in Fiji*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

⁷⁹ Nayacakalou, R. R. 1975. *Leadership in Fiji*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

⁸⁰ Scarr, D. 1988. *Fiji: Politics of Illusion: The Military Coups in Fiji*. University of New South Wales, Australia.

Alley explains the emergence of party politics in Fiji as influenced by colonial political arrangement. In the formation of the Fijian Association in 1956, leading figures like Sir Maurice Scott and Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, also directly associated with the Fijian Administration, were the founders of the organization. However, the organization lay dormant until the early 1960s concurrent with the move by Britain in initiating pre-independence Constitutional talk. The reactivation of this political organization was inevitably dominated by leading Fijian chiefs in the Legislative Council as well as a few British educated commoners. The ultimate move to form the Alliance Party as a "grand coalition" of multiracial alliance was dominated by indigenous Fijians. The Fijian Association, being dominated by eastern and northeastern chiefly elites, naturally adopted a "politics from above" approach. Amongst the Fijian supporters of the Alliance Party, this was to be a catalyst for future contradictions. Nayacakalou, explains that the introduction of party politics in the 1960s provided an opportunity for modern political leadership to Fijians who were not traditional leaders. In this context political parties as democratic institutions become modern avenues for socio-political elevation as well as modern means for power control. On this note, Nayacakalou commented on the "politics from above" structure of the Fijian Association. Being formed and controlled by chiefly elites, Nayacakalou believed that in the long term it was practical to allow a party to grow from below and be formed by people with similar economic and social needs. He argued that:

If the association was reconstituted by those running it unsuccessfully, then it would soon divorce itself from the needs of local Fijian life. As a centrally-directed grouping, inevitably dominated by leading chiefs, it would remain at odds with the needs and aspirations of the "lewe-ni-vanua" or 'ordinary people'. Rather than mechanically contriving a political party into existence, Nayacakalou believed it was better to allow it to grow organically from the economic needs of the people themselves. Possible points of aggregation, he believed, included trade unionism, copra planting and the sugar and banana industries.⁸¹

That the Fijian Association was an elite Fijian group which was out of touch with the common Fijians was clearly implied by Nayacakalou. Ratu Mara's rejection of Nayacakalou's recommendations⁸² demonstrated consciously or unconsciously his underlying belief that amongst indigenous Fijians modern

⁸¹ See Alley, R. 1986: 33.

⁸² Ibid., 1986: 33.

party politics should operate through the traditional chiefly hierarchy of which he was a member.⁸³ This study argues that such thinking demonstrated how the modern party system was used to extend traditional chiefly interests. In the case of the Fijian Association, it was those from eastern and northeastern Fiji. The use of the political party to extend traditional interests later became a contradiction for Mara's Alliance Party as it was later confronted by both traditional and modern challenges.

Mamak has also discussed the attempt by the Fijian Association in the 1963 election to counter the threat posed by the two western Fijian based political parties, Western Democratic Party and the Fijian National Party, formed by Apisai Tora and Isikeli Nadalo. Mamak has not given any in depth analysis of the emergence of regional politics within Fijian society nor any analysis of its implications.

On this note Durutalo argued that Fijian politics under the Alliance Party involved the maintenance of communal politics to conceal class interests. He argued that the use of communalism to support class interests created its own dynamics and problems within Fijian society and in the process social class differences was deliberately overlooked. Additionally, in such a situation, the plight of disadvantaged Fijians were blamed on Indo-Fijian dominance of the economy.⁸⁴

Lal follows a similar line of argument in explaining that the Fijian military coups of 1987 were a temporary solution to long-term internal contradictions within Fijian society. He explains that these problems can only be addressed by Fijian leaders. Politically progressive Fijians, according to Lal, have to wage political battles on many fronts in order to enter politics. These include the Fijian administration and its chiefly class; Fijians who have inculcated the notion that there is one "politically correct" Fijian political party which has the right to control and monopolize political power; the local bourgeoisie whose business interests

⁸³ Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara became the leader of the Fijian Association after its reconstitution in the mid-1960s and also became the leader of the Alliance party when the party was formed in 1965.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 1986: 51.

are linked with those who control political power; foreign powers and other capitalist allies who have business tentacles in Fiji since the colonial period.⁸⁵

Premdas' discussion of the rise of Fijian nationalism and the formation of Sakeasi Butadroka's Fijian Nationalist Party reflects the weakness of the plural society thesis in treating Fiji's political discourse under only two main ethnic categories. This perspective not only reduces Fijians to a monolithic category but is ahistorical in its approach and understanding of indigenous Fijian society. In discussing Fijian society and the dominance of the Alliance Party, Premdas states:

No one expected a splinter party to emerge, especially with its base within the Fijian section.⁸⁶

While Premdas generally exhibits a general ignorance of the diversity of Fijian society and the impact of culture on party politics, Scarr, a renowned Fijian historian, on the other hand deliberately or otherwise, explains Fijian society from a particular perspective. Scarr introduces another school of thought to this discourse when he articulates ethnic reasons to justify the 1987 military coups. He proposes that the multi-ethnic political parties, which had won elections in April of 1987 and which included the Indian-dominated National Federation Party and the Fiji Labour Party, had been politically naïve to believe that indigenous Fijians could easily give up their political rights to non-Fijians. Indigenous Fijians who joined these political parties were politically ignorant and were either being misled or simply did not understand the political implications of their actions. Furthermore, Scarr explains that in the first instance, Fijians had reluctantly ceded their islands because of the fear of being dominated by Europeans; this fear was still very much prevalent amongst indigenous Fijians. He argues that:

The problem tended to be that when Ratu Mara said things like blood will flow in this country if Indians do not understand the deep emotional feelings Fijians have for their land', political opponents were inclined to believe a phantom was being paraded for party purposes, not that a prediction was being made. Land was a symbol. The Indian complaint that, after five generations in Fiji – a time span largely symbolic too, for most of the other community – they could get only leases to what Fijians owned, was reckoned poor behaviour. Some still asked openly for leasehold in perpetuity.

⁸⁵ Lal, B.V. 1992: 296-304.

⁸⁶ Premdas, R. R. 1980: 41.

The constitution, while guaranteeing Fijian present ownership, did not altogether remove the possibility of it being changed.⁸⁷

A weakness of this argument by Scarr, which this study intends to analyze, is that the ethnic debate glosses over internal Fijian contradictions, rivalries and dissent which lie at the core of the Fijian polity. Scarr fails to explain why Fijians formed or joined other political parties and the contribution of this "non-conformity" to the broader Fijian political discourse. Like Scarr, Ravuvu also argues that ethnicity is a reality of life and it occurs naturally because people are culturally diverse. He argues for the maintenance of communal politics in Fiji because this protects Fijians from the greed of the Indians. He also argues for the maintenance of racial politics and racial political parties as a means to achieving racial equality. Like Scarr's explanations, this line of argument assumes a monolithic socio-political order and again fails to discuss the diversities and complexities of Fijian culture. The "fear of Indian domination"⁸⁸ has exacerbated and camouflaged internal Fijian political contradictions as well as concealed the real issues which need addressing to enable Fijian economic development and political advancement. The spontaneous formation of Fijian political parties in the period under study reflects internal societal dilemmas and exposes the diverse social realities which influence Fijian political thinking and the attempt to introduce alternative paths to Fijian economic development. In the process it exposes the reality of power rivalry and leadership competition within Fijian society.

The fear of Indian threat as proposed by Scarr and Ravuvu is explained by Thomas as part of political mystification that an Indian-dominated government would be the gradual cause of the alienation of native land. Thomas argues that this:

Reflects the interpenetration of mystification and actuality that always seems to have been a prominent feature of Fijian colonial and neo-colonial politics: a fear that may have been substantially ungrounded becomes a 'political fact' and subsequently an actuality and a cause.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Scarr, D. 1988. *Fiji: Politics of Illusion: The Military Coups in Fiji*. New South Wales University Press, Australia: 31.

⁸⁸ Ali explained that Fijian fear of Indians began when Indians arrived as Indentured labourers in 1879. From then on, Fijians feared losing their land to the newcomers. See Ali, A. 1968. "Political Change, 1874-1960", in *Politics in Fiji*, Lal, B.V. (ed). Allen & Unwin, Sydney: 7.

⁸⁹ Thomas, N. "Regional Politics, Ethnicity and Customs in Fiji" in *The Contemporary Pacific: A Journal of Island Affairs*, Vol. 2 (1), Spring 1990: 131.

Political mystification through ethnic explanation of political problems conceals internal Fijian contradictions and the role that Fijian political thinking and dissent contribute in shaping the Fijian political discourse. This study goes beyond the boundaries of previous studies by focusing on the role of Fijian political thinking and dissent in the formation of Fijian political parties. While it focuses on the role of the past in shaping political thinking and dissent, it also links this with the influence of colonial social construction and the impact of modern liberal democracy. The study weaves in the influence of both culture and modern influences in party formation.

Fijian History and Its Role in This Study

From the time when the ancestors of Fijians first settled in Fiji until 1800 A.D. when Europeans arrived in large numbers, the history of the Fijian people in all its cultural diversity and linguistic complexity was always handed down orally from one generation to another. Fijian history was recorded through traditions in the form of "talanoa" (stories), "itukuni" (legends), "serekali" (poems), "sere" (songs) and "vosa vakaibalebale" (Fijian idioms). Different types of "meke" (dances) also relate stories. The "meke iwau" (club dance) or "meke wesi" (spear dance) are usually male dances and narrate war stories or conquests. The various women's dances are less warlike and communicate stories about travel or describe nature from particular cultural perspectives.

The different types of artwork also relate Fijian history from the artists' viewpoint. Fijian "talitali"⁹⁰ with the different weaves in mats tell different stories and specific weaves are identified with different groups throughout the Fiji Islands. Like the stories, which are woven into the different patterns on Fijian mats, history weaves together the diverse subjective realities of the Fijian people into patterns that provide a sense of continuity from the past to the present.

The importance of the "past" in the cultural realities of Pacific Island societies has been emphasized in the languages of Hawaii, Tonga and Fiji. In the cultures of these societies, the past is conceptualized as "the time in front" or

“the future” when explained in native languages and dialects. In the Tongan language, “kuonga mu’a” refers to the past; “kuonga” refers to time and “mua” means front. Similarly, in the Hawaiian language the past is referred to as “ka wa mamua”; meaning “the time in front or before”. In the native Fijian dialects, the past is referred to as: “gauna imata” (western Fijian dialects); or “gauna imada” (eastern Fijian Cakaudrove and Lauan dialects); and “gauna e liu” (eastern Fijian Bauan dialect). “Gauna” means time and “mata”, “mada” and “liu” means front. “Gauna e muri” in Fijian denotes the future; “muri” means behind.

Kame’eleihiwa stresses the importance of the past in the Hawaiian culture when she explains that:

the past is referred to as “ka wa mamua”, the time in front or before...It is as if the Hawaiian stands firmly in the present, with his back to the future, and his eyes fixed upon the past, seeking historical answers to present day dilemmas...It also bestows upon us a natural propensity to study history .⁹¹

Contemporary dilemmas in the Fijian political systems, that is in both the modern and traditional forms, requires a re-visit to the past through present evidence to provide an understanding of the contemporary political situation.

Elton argues that:

Historical study is not the study of the past but the study of present traces of the past; ... the crucial element is the present evidence, not the fact of past existence; ...it [history] can be reconstructed – seen and understood again – only if it has left present matter behind.⁹²

In the case of Fijian party politics, evidence of the influence of the past is infused in the modern political system as a whole. While the idea behind the formation of political parties is modern, the actual practice of party politics from attracting party membership to influencing votes displays strong inclinations towards some conceptualization of pre-colonial patterns. Fijian ideas about the past are many and varied, reflecting the diversity of customs and traditions.

While the role of the past has been an important consideration in this research, a critical look at the different interpretations of the past by different political

⁹⁰ “Talitali” in Fijian means weaving as in mat or basket weaving.

⁹¹ Hau’ofa, E. 2000. “Pasts to Remember”, in Broofsky, R. (ed). *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts: An Invitation to Remake History*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu: 459.

⁹² Elton, G. R. 1967. *The Practice of History*. Fontana Press, London: 20-21.

parties is a crucial element of the study, as our view of the past is not considered as static or totally objective but is influenced by our ideas of the present. Guinsburg argues that:

The present influences our idea of the past and our idea of the past influences the present...the present is the product of all the past ...It is equally true...to say that the past (our imagined picture of it) is the product of all the present. We build our conceptions of history partly out of our present needs and purposes. The past is a kind of screen upon which we project our vision of the future and it is indeed a moving picture, borrowing much of its form and colour from our fears and aspirations.⁹³

Within Fijian polity, different interpretations of the past have contributed to the formation of different political parties. The thinking behind the formation of many Fijian political parties, particularly mainstream Fijian political parties in eastern and northeastern Fiji, while influenced by modern democratic principles, are founded on an attempt to rebuild an imagined past to meet present leadership needs and aspirations. This trend of thinking becomes problematic in itself when ideas about the past in terms of socio-political hierarchies are many and varied amongst different indigenous social groups.

Methodology

I used a number of research methods to gather data for my thesis. Foremost among them was archival research in which I spent six months looking through records on Fijian history and political history in general. These included records of the pre-colonial Cakobau and Ma'afu governments; the Colonial Secretary's Office (CSO) correspondence; records of the Native Council, later Council of Chiefs meetings from 1875 onwards. This provided an in-depth view into the creation of the "Matanitu iTaukei" or the Native Administration and the system of indirect rule. Government gazettes, especially, from the 1950s until 2001 were studied since these had election data since the introduction of party politics. The Fiji Times since the 1860s and other Fijian newspapers have also been invaluable sources of political information.

In-depth interviews complemented archival research. They are an invaluable tool in any attempt to understand Fijian political thinking and the role of dissent in the formation of political parties. A number of current Fijian politicians as well

⁹³ Guinsburg, T. N. 1971 (Ed). *The Dimensions of History*. Rand MacNally & Co., Chicago: 40.

as former politicians and traditional leaders were interviewed. Their personal stories regarding their experiences and views provided a unique opportunity to understand Fijian political thinking and dissent as well as the evolution of Fijian party politics since 1960. Personal stories cannot be obtained from the archives.

Research in the Elections Office also yielded valuable data. Party constitutions and personal correspondence enabled an understanding of the many Fijian views of party politics. However, a major drawback which I encountered at the Elections Office was the missing records between 1960 and 1987. These included information on formation of political parties, party constitutions and personal correspondence between the parties and the Elections Office.⁹⁴

A rare opportunity of being a “Mata Sureti”⁹⁵ or invited representative in the 2001 Council of Chiefs meetings, gave me the opportunity to observe and listen to discussions. It also gave me the privilege to observe and listen to provincial discussions when members dispersed into their provincial groups to discuss certain issues.

Part of the data for this research was gathered during Fiji’s general election in 2001 where I observed the politics of voting as well as interviewing voters at different polling stations in eastern and western Viti Levu.

Information gathered from submissions during the review of Fiji’s 1990 Constitution has been most useful in this research. The thinking behind the submissions from individuals and different types of Fijian groups have also informed the thesis.⁹⁶

My background as an indigenous Fijian also informs my research. My family kinship links in both eastern and western Viti Levu with matrilineal links to the Lau Group provided an invaluable contribution in terms of an in-depth

⁹⁴ I obtained this information from Fiji’s Elections Office while conducting fieldwork in 2002.

⁹⁵ Being a “Mata Sureti” or invited representative in the Council of Chiefs meeting also gave me the privilege to observe provincial group discussions.

⁹⁶ These submissions have been obtained from the personal collections of one of the three 1990 Constitutional Review Commissioners, Professor Brij V. Lal of the Australian National University.

understanding of the inter-link between the traditional and modern politics in these different vanua. My province of Tailevu is the center of the “Matanitu of Kubuna”, once the most powerful traditional Matanitu in eastern Fiji, while my mother’s province of Lau belongs to the Tovata Confederacy which was the creation of Ma’afu in the 1860s. Through my late father’s traditional role as a vanua chief in Namena in the province of Tailevu and through his teaching career which spanned over forty years in both the colonial and post-colonial period, I had the opportunity to live in different vanua and also learnt and spoke a number of Fijian dialects, apart from my father’s Namena dialect or “vosa vaka-Namena”⁹⁷ and my mother’s Lauan Matuku dialect or “vosa vaka-Matuku”.⁹⁸ Speaking and understanding many dialects unlocks the door to an intricate understanding of customs and traditions which are associated with different vanua in Fiji. My link to western Viti Levu has been through the migration of my mataqali, “Tui Maumi”, of the “Yavusa Nawainovo” from the Yavusa Natauiya,⁹⁹ in Korotiki, Nanukuloa in the vanua of Saivou and Nabukadra, the vanua of the “Gone Sau”¹⁰⁰ in Nakorotubu in the province of Ra in western Viti Levu.¹⁰¹ My socio-political disposition in my own vanua and kinship links to other vanua in eastern and western Fiji enables me to view Fijian political history from many vantage points. In Fijian and Pacific History, one’s kinship root “sala ni veiwekani” is a valuable source for understanding indigenous knowledge.

Like the Fijian art of “talitali” different methods are interwoven to arrive at an overall pattern and also highlight themes in the research.

⁹⁷ The Namena dialect is spoken in the vanua of Namena in the province of Tailevu.

⁹⁸ The Matuku dialect is spoken in the island and vanua of Matuku in the province of Lau in eastern Fiji. It is one of the many dialects spoken in the province of Lau.

⁹⁹ The yavusa Natauiya is the leading yavusa in Nanukuloa in the vanua of Saivou in Ra in western Viti Levu.

¹⁰⁰ The “Gone Sau” is the highest title in the vanua of Nakorotubu in Ra in western Viti Levu.

¹⁰¹ The history of the migration of my clan has always been handed down from one generation to another through the oral tradition until colonization and the first sittings of the Native Lands Commission in 1880 where such oral histories known as “itukutuku raraba” were recorded. I first received the narrative about the migration of my people from my late father, who continued in the tradition used by his forefathers to pass down important kinship knowledge through generations. Part of this information, narrating the story of my great, great grandfather, Nagalu, a warrior chief from Ra, who was a contemporary of Ratu Seru Cakobau, was published by R. A. Derrick (1943). Nagalu contributed six hundred warriors to Cakobau in the 1854 Battle of Kaba, together with the Tongans and other allies of Cakobau, leading to his victory. The Battle of Kaba secured the place of Bau in the mid-nineteenth century.

Sources

The nature of the research topic justifies the selection of a wide range of primary sources. These include archival documents such as letters, Colonial Secretary's Office correspondence, newspapers, records of Council of Chiefs meetings and government gazettes. Other primary sources include in-depth interviews, data from the elections office, observations and interviews during the 2001 general elections, and participant observation at the Council of Chiefs meetings. Secondary sources such as books and Journal articles have also been consulted in this research. My personal observation as an indigenous Fijian enhances my understanding of Fijian politics in general. An in-depth knowledge of local dialects, customs and traditions are invaluable tools for understanding a people's history. A non-Fijian researcher may lack the ability to interpret meanings out of individual or group actions because they do not understand the language which unlocks the intricate relations of customary practices within the Fijian culture.

Tosh argues that in the proper assessment of a document, the historian:

Requires the application of both supporting knowledge and skeptical intelligence. 'Records', it has been said, 'like the children of long ago, only speak when they are spoken to, and they will not talk to strangers'. Nor ...will they be very forthcoming to anyone in a tearing hurry.¹⁰²

A variety of sources widen the possibility of understanding the area of research as well as filling the gap in literature. Elton argues that in historical research:

What matters are the sources, that is to say the physical survivals from the events to be studied. And here the first demand of sound historical scholarship must be stressed: it must rest on a broad-fronted attack upon all the relevant material. Historical research does not consist, as beginners in particular often suppose, in the pursuit of some particular evidence, which will answer a particular question; it consists of an exhaustive, and exhausting, review of everything that may conceivably be germane to a given investigation.¹⁰³

The move away from the traditional source of historical research is perhaps necessary and justified because not much has been written on it, nor has

¹⁰² Tosh, J. 1991. *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (2nd ed). Longman, London: 56; Cheney, C. R. (1973: 8) as quoted in Tosh, J. 1991, Ibid: 56.

¹⁰³ Elton, G. R. 1987. *The Practice of History*. Fontana Press, London: 88.

previous research been done in this area of Fijian political history. In this particular investigation, sources such as in-depth interviews and an in-depth understanding amongst people of different vanua are invaluable for an understanding of Fijian political thinking. Interviews with political party leaders, politicians, traditional leaders such as chiefs, party supporters and others, provide an avenue for understanding the factors that shape Fijian political thinking. Such relevant sources of knowledge and information cannot be obtained from the “official” sources in the Archives which are most confined to “official” reports which are sanctioned by government. So a combination of a number of sources is relevant for the nature of the current study. Tosh also supports this point when he argues that:

Historical research is not a matter of identifying the authoritative source and then exploiting it for all its worth, for the majority of sources are in some way inaccurate, incomplete or tainted by prejudice and self-interest. The procedure is to amass as many pieces of evidence as possible from a wide range of sources – preferably from all the sources which have a bearing on the problem in hand...Each type of source possesses certain strengths and weaknesses; considered together, and compared one against the other, there is at least a chance that they will reveal the true facts – or something very close to them. This is why mastery of a variety of facts is one of the hallmarks of historical scholarship.¹⁰⁴

Additionally, as part of the attempt to understand contemporary or modern Pacific History, the study has taken an approach to sources, which Howe described as part of the attempt to see the whole story. He explains:

Modern Pacific historians have instead examined what might be called a series of substructures made of different materials and for different purposes. The superstructure is not necessarily altered or distorted ... so much as seen from new perspectives. The new approach, bringing the Islanders into focus and studying their activities, reveals a whole range of hitherto-ignored considerations.¹⁰⁵

The sources in this particular study illuminate a view of history which is dynamic and which exposes Fijians as active participants in making their own political history. While colonial contact, through the creation of various institutions such as the “Matanitu iTaukei” or Fijian Administration in Fiji, has shaped the direction of history, individual or group efforts, by taking advantage of special

¹⁰⁴ Tosh, J. 1991: 65-66.

¹⁰⁵ Howe, K. R. 1984. *Where the Waves Fall*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu: 347.

circumstances have established themselves in the new struggle for power. Within Fijian society, the introduction of party politics provides a new avenue to study Fijian political thinking, dissent and overall power struggle between 1960 and 1999.

KO VITI MAKAWA (OLD FIJI): FROM THE “ITOKATOKA” TO THE “MATANITU” (1800 – 1873)

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the diverse nature of Fijian society since the 1800s. Fiji's geography contributed to language variations and culture complexity.¹ Such diversity is shown through language and dialectal variations as well as custom and tradition variations in different vanua and regions throughout the Fiji group. Fiji's geography and diverse socio-political make-up made it difficult for one chief to assert political control throughout the group.

This chapter will discuss the evolution of kinship and political structures from the most basic social unit, “itokatoka” to the most complex political construct, “matanitu”. The evolution of kinship and political structures and socio-political relations within them differ throughout Fiji. While matanitu as a political construct evolved in eastern Fiji, it did not evolve in the various vanua in western Viti Levu. Frequent contact with Polynesian chiefdoms such as Tonga, and later, the different waves of Europeans, influenced empire-building and rivalry in eastern Fiji.

Rivalry for political control was exacerbated and necessitated by the arrival of the different waves of Europeans since the 1800s. They contributed to the rise and demise of chiefdoms in eastern and northeastern Fiji. Immediately prior to cession in 1874, the chiefdom of Bau under Ratu Seru Cakobau had consolidated its rule. However, Cession and the dominance of Bau during colonization through the system of indirect rule did not totally eradicate internal subtle rivalry and dissent even within eastern and northeastern Fijian polity. Rivalry continued amongst competing chiefly households from the level of the itokatoka to the matanitu. While Christianity and later colonization froze

¹ The Fiji group consists of approximately three hundred and sixty-six islands.

and consolidated the chiefly institution and its incumbents, the modern political system provided an avenue for the emergence of members of rival groups.

Internal Divisions and Cultural Variations: The Basis of Diversity

From the point of view of an outsider looking in, Fijian society may appear homogenous. However, cultural and linguistic variations are common throughout the group from west to east and north to south. The further away one vanua is from another, the greater the cultural and linguistic variation. A number of scholars on Fiji have emphasized these variations through sociological, linguistic and anthropological research.

Williams, writing in 1858, proposed that Fiji in the 1700s was most probably patriarchal, consisting of many independent states with minimal contact, and further more argues that the states had no political connection with each other. He explains that:

The great variety of dialects spoken, the comparative ignorance of some of the present kingdoms about each other, and the existence until now of a kind of independence in some of the smaller divisions of the same state, countenance the above supposition.²

Discussing language and dialect diversity, Capell and Lester (1941),³ as well as Pawley and Sayaba (1971),⁴ confirm that there were two major linguistic and many dialectal divisions in Fiji. These were the western main language or the proto-western language, from which the western Fijian dialects emerged and the eastern main language or the proto-eastern language, from which all eastern Fijian dialects originated. Beneath the dialects were communalects, which are sub-groups of dialects within a dialect-speaking locality. For instance, within my own dialect locality which is the "Namena dialect"⁵, distinct

² Williams, T. 1982. *Fiji and the Fijians: The Islands and their Inhabitants* (Vol.1-re-print). Fiji Museum, Suva: 18. Thomas Williams' writings on Fiji was first published in London in 1858.

³ Capell, A. and Lester, R. H. 1941. *Local Divisions and Movements in Fiji*. Oceania.

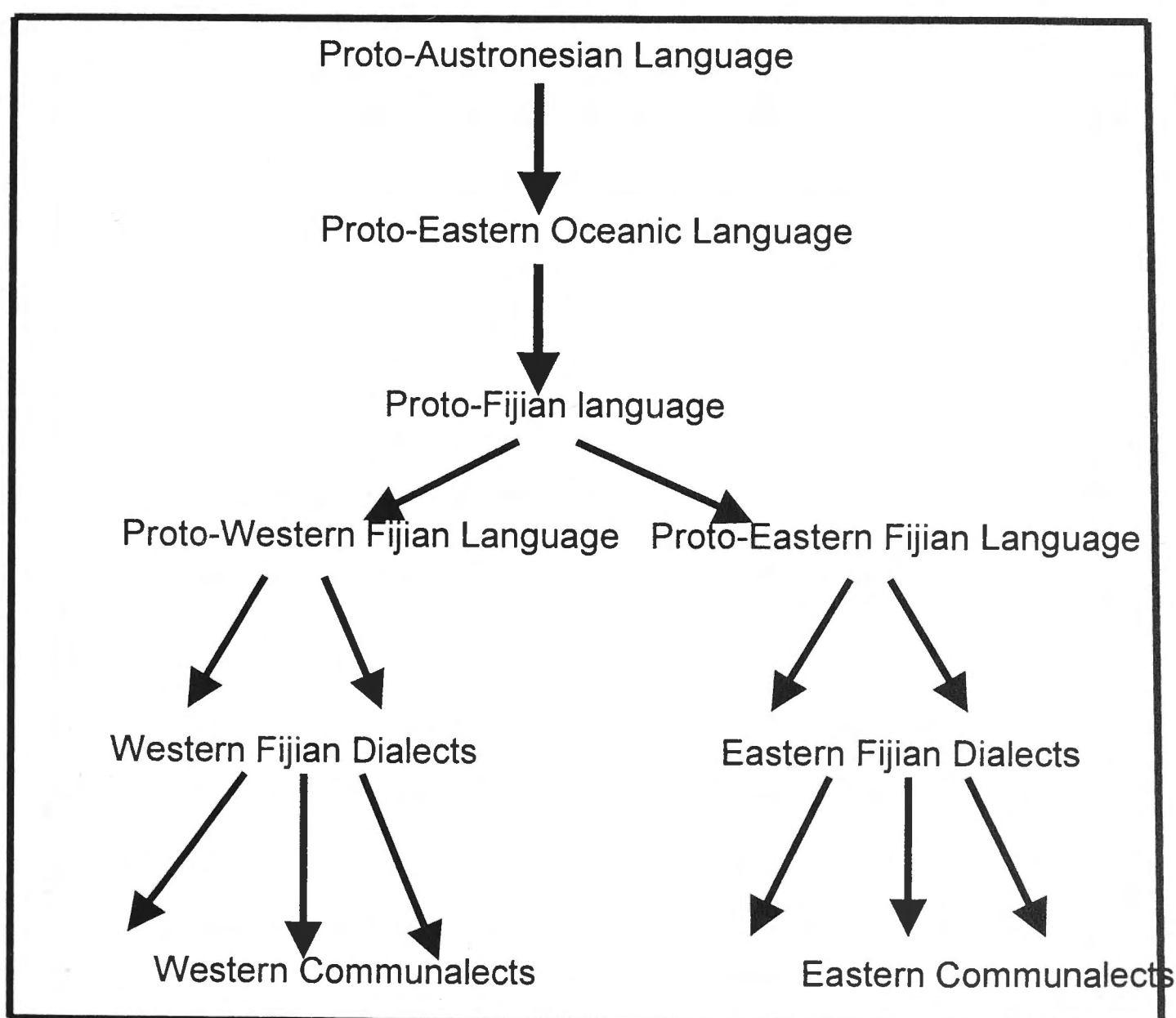
⁴ Pawley, A. and Sayaba, T. "Fijian Dialect Divisions: Eastern and Western Fijian" in *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 80 (4), December 1971: 405-436.

⁵ Namena is one of the 22 vanua in the province of Tailevu and the Namena dialect is spoken in the vanua of Namena which is comprised of a number of villages and settlements.

ways of speaking the dialect have developed in certain villages or groups of villages within the vanua or district of Namena.

Pawley and Sayaba further argue that the two main languages found in Fiji were ancient and had branched out from the Proto-Fijian language more than two thousand years ago. This Proto-Fijian language in turn was a member of the Proto-Eastern Oceanic language, and hence a member of the Proto-Austronesian language, the proto language from which all members of the Austronesian family are presumed to have derived.⁶ The diagram below illustrates language evolution in Fiji.

Figure 1: Language Evolution in Fiji



Pawley and Sayaba further argue that the nature of dialect diversity on the island of Viti Levu, small as it is with a land area of only 4,011 square miles, is

⁶ The Austronesian language is a large family of languages, whose members are found in some locations on the Asian mainland, island South East Asia, Madagascar, parts of New Guinea, many Melanesian countries, Micronesia and Polynesia. See Lynch, J. 1998. *Pacific Languages: An Introduction*. University of Hawaii, Honolulu: 300-301, 308.

much greater than dialect diversity found in the continental West Germanic region with a land area of 200,000 square miles. This implies that the separation of the western Fijian and eastern Fijian dialects took place more than two thousand years ago. Further to this thesis was the proposition that contact between dialects, that is, between the two main groups, was minimal so that marked differences amongst the dialects were a reflection of long periods of isolation.⁷

The diversity of the Fijian culture is reflected in linguistic and dialectal variations throughout Fiji. Politically, variations in dialect explain socio-political diversity throughout the group. Additionally, the retention of dialectal variations reflects the diversity and independent nature of socio-political relations in many vanua. Pre-colonial political domination was incomplete without the total subjugation of the dialects of the subjugated people.

It is within the context of language and dialects that culture becomes meaningful. Language and dialects verbalise the meanings of culture through the use of different words and sounds. Each dialect group in Fiji articulates the unique social development of groups of people within a vanua or dialect speaking area. The existence of many dialect variations in Fiji is a reflection of the existence of many unique forms of histories throughout the group.

Ko Viti Makawa (Old Fiji): From Kinship Cycles to Political Hierarchies

The roots of contemporary Fijian political history and the emergence and shaping of modern political parties amongst indigenous Fijians can be traced as far back as the early 19th century, a period of internal political rivalry which was exacerbated by the arrival of the different waves of Europeans. These included beachcombers, runaway convicts from the British penal colony of Australia, sandalwood and beche-de-mer traders, whalers, planters, missionaries and finally the colonizers in 1874. Also included in the outside influence were Tongans, who had socio-political and economic relations with eastern Fijians well before European contact, and who also became active

⁷ Pawley, A. and Sayaba, T. Vol. 80 No. 4., December, 1971. "Fijian Dialect Divisions: Eastern and Western Fijian", in *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*: 416.

participants in Fijian politics between 1800 and 1874. While documented records of Fijian history concentrated more in parts of eastern and northeastern Fiji which were the main areas of contact with the outside world, oral versions of Fijian history also existed throughout Fiji. Some times these two versions of history negate each other in terms of the nature of the stories they relay.

Documented versions of Fijian history record that the rise and fall of powerful chiefdoms in eastern and northeastern Fiji was not only a hallmark of this period, but was also characteristic of ongoing change and continuity within eastern and northeastern Fijian society. Political rivalry saw the decline of the Verata chiefdom with her political allies in the late 1700s and the rise of the Bauan chiefdom with her political allies in the early 1800s.⁸ From recorded history alone, what emerges is that the making of eastern and northeastern Fijian history and the consequent emergence of its ensuing orthodoxy at the beginning of the 19th century, was a product of the blending of powerful external forces with ambitious internal determination in the process of vying for political control and supremacy.

Ongoing internal political rivalries were exacerbated by outside forces whose intervention led to the consolidation of powerful chiefdoms mostly in eastern Fiji. Influential eastern Fijian chiefs since the 1800s did not gain political supremacy from their own effort, nor were they passive receivers of modernization, but had been dynamic political actors who had learnt to turn opportunities into political and economic gains. In 1808, Naulivou, the Vunivalu of Bau, utilized the knowledge of Charles Savage, a Swedish beachcomber, for his own political gain. He made Savage the "Vunivalu's (Warlord's) White man". Savage taught the Bauans the art of modern weaponry in terms of how to use guns. Naulivou turned this new knowledge

⁸ See also Williams, T. 1982: 19.

into gain when he declared war on Verata and took possession of her dependencies.⁹ Additionally, Derrick explains:

For five years Savage continued at Bau, dividing his time between periods of beach-combing and idleness, and bloody campaigns which laid the foundation of Bau's political power and gained for him the title of Koroi-na-Vunivalu.¹⁰

The Bauans were able to utilize this newly acquired skill to their own advantage. Savage on the other hand was protected by Naulivou and received special privileges like courting Bauan women. This was an example of a symbiotic relationship in which both parties acquired political gains.

By the 1800s, Fiji had highly developed indigenous socio-political constructs within which Fijian society evolved. It was within the context of these constructs that political rivalries were played out, resulting in the extension or retraction of socio-political and economic frontiers. In the process of change and continuity, boundaries were continuously defined and re-defined in the course of competition for power. The rate of change and power competition varied throughout the group, giving rise to variations in socio-political and economic organizations. While socio-political organizations and the customs and traditions which accompanied them varied throughout the group, an important element in their existence was the roles which were maintained through these organizations and institutions to enable the survival of the different groups of Fijians for thousands of years prior to European contact.¹¹

The most basic social unit within which power relations were exercised was the "itokatoka", "bito" or "batinilovo".¹² The extended family was both patrilineal and matrilineal in descent. While in most parts of the Fiji group,

⁹ Ibid., 1982: 19.

¹⁰ Derrick, R.A. 1946. *A History of Fiji* (Vol.1). Government Printing Press, Colony of Fiji: 44-45.

¹¹ The latest archaeological evidence of the human settlement of the Fiji group was found on Moturiki island in the Lomaiviti group where a human skeleton excavated from a grave is estimated to be three thousand years old. See Reid, R. K. 2003. "Pacific's Oldest Man: Unearthed in Fiji Where He Lies Undisturbed for About 3000 Years", in *Islands*, Vol.2, 2003. Island Business International, Suva, Fiji: 54-56.

¹² "Tokatoka", "Bito" or "Batinilovo" are different Fijian terms for the extended family which are used in different parts of the Fiji group.

especially in eastern Fiji, descent was patrilineal, there were other parts of the group which emphasized a matrilineal line of descent. Deane observed that indigenous groups on the second largest island, Vanua Levu, had many distinct signs of the matriarchate. In some of the groups descent was traced through the mother for thirteen generations. Women in these areas held land in their own rights and also became heads of phratries. Deane further argues that Vanua Levu was apparently linked to Melanesia since it was distinctly matriarchate while groups on the island of Viti Levu were connected to Polynesia due to their strong patriarchate characteristics.¹³ However, even in the different vanua on the island of Viti Levu, the observations of customs such as “lewe ni ketekete” or “covi ni draudrau”, whereby land was allocated to women of rank at the time of marriage, is an indication of the recognition of women’s rights through their accessibility to land rights.

A number of extended families comprised the “mataqali” or sub-clan. Members of a mataqali are closely related in the context of the Fijian kinship system. The social unit itself may have evolved as a result of the extension of the traditional division of labour, where two sons may have formed their own social groups. In my own yavusa of Tui Nawainovo, two brothers, Masitabua and Masiyarayara, who originated from one yavu or house foundation, were the original founders of two of the three mataqali in the yavusa or clan.¹⁴ Through socio-political evolution, the three mataqali specialized in roles, obligations and privileges. The mataqali Tui Maumi became the chiefly sub-clan in the early 1800s. The mataqali Vuaniboro became the “matanivanua”, or chiefly herald and the mataqali Tabanimalo became advisors on chiefly matters, with a traditional obligation of protecting the chiefly institution in the vanua.

¹³ Dean, W. 1921. *Fijian Society or the Sociology and Psychology of the Fijians*. Macmillan & Co., London: 2-4.

¹⁴ “A iTukutuku Raraba Ni Veiyavusa Ena Veitikina Yadua: Namena”. 1930. Native Lands Commission, Suva Fiji: 310.

Within the Fijian social system, traditional roles are defined under the different social units.¹⁵ The most senior extended family within the sub-clan decides on the headship of the mataqali. Within the sub-clan, each extended family has social rank and status. In some parts of Fiji, the itokatoka was registered as a mataqali unit by the Native Lands Commission.¹⁶ This confirms the diversity of Fijian cultural practices in pre-colonial Fiji, which the colonial state through its Native Lands Commission attempted to unify under one system since 1880. The Governor, in the Legislative Council meeting in 1892, explains:

The boundaries of lands in Fiji dividing one mataqali from another and one province from another were, prior to the date of Cession, always more or less unsettled and had ever been the subject of bitter dispute and frequent fighting.¹⁷

That some sub-clans had only one extended family in a mataqali while others had many implies a number of possibilities. Firstly, is that the evolution of the mataqali differed throughout Fiji. Secondly, social evolution differed throughout Fiji due to the arrival and settlement of people through different waves of migrations, with the result that the conceptualization of social organizations also differed. Internal migrations and the separation of people disrupted the functions of such social groupings.

The mataqali Rara in the vanua of Namena in the province of Tailevu is linked with other mataqali Rara in other vanua in the provinces of Tailevu and Naitasiri; both provinces are members of the Matanitu of Kubuna. The fragmentation of the once large yavusa of Rara into smaller sub-clans which are scattered in different parts of Viti Levu relate stories of internal migrations as well as stories about the extension of traditional roles and kinship links throughout the group.

The mataqali as a social unit for land ownership was imposed on those who did not use it as such to enable uniformity since the initial Native Lands

¹⁵ In my village, the six mataqali in it all have their distinct traditional roles. The performance of the different roles were crucial for the survival of the vanua.

¹⁶ The Native Land Commission was established in 1880 to codify and register native land in Fiji. See France, P. 1969. *The Charter of the Land: Custom and Colonisation in Fiji*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne: 149-175.

¹⁷ France, P. 1969: 129.

Commission's sittings in the 1880s. It was rare to find the use of the mataqali as a landowning unit to be of long-term benefit except in cases where a mataqali was composed of a single tokatoka or extended family. In the village of Natabuquto in Magodro, Ba, the tokatoka "Vunadakua", which is composed of one extended family, also became the mataqali Vunadakua. This tokatoka-mataqali which is composed of one extended family unit only had much more land than other mataqali in the village with more extended families. Such are the types of contradictions which emerged within the Fijian social system as a result of the attempt to impose new meanings on ancient customary practices.

Routledge argues that it is not possible to give absolute meanings to social groups in Fiji since meanings differ from one end of the country to another.¹⁸ This further illustrates the different realities in terms of social groupings which existed in different parts of Fiji prior to cession to Great Britain in 1874. However, Christianity and British colonization were two foreign agents which contributed to the social construction of cultural realities to enable socio-political uniformity in Fijian society.

Beyond the mataqali was a larger social unit called the "yavusa"¹⁹ or the clan. The yavusa was the largest social unit within the Fijian kinship system, with a number of mataqali comprising the yavusa. Members of a yavusa are believed to have descended from one "yavu" or house foundation and one "Kalou Vu" or ancestral God. The Fijian kinship system was founded on the three social units called the "itokatoka" ("bito or "batinilovo"); "mataqali", and "yavusa". Pre-colonial internal migrations amongst indigenous Fijians had often caused the break-up of larger "yavusa" into smaller ones. When this occurred, new leaders were appointed for the new "yavusa".

¹⁸ See Routledge, D. 1985. *Matanitu: The Struggle for Power in Early Fiji*. Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, Fiji: 29.

¹⁹ The word "yavusa" in Fijian is derived from the word "yavu" which means "house foundation". People of one yavusa descend from the same ancestral God and one house foundation.

Ratu Inosi Kuridrani relates the migration of the yavusa Vusu from the mountains of Navosa in inland western Viti Levu, to coastal Navosa. This includes the villages of Namatakula, Biausevu, Komave and Votua Lalai. Part of this large yavusa had dispersed during the journey and are now living in parts of Namosi and Serua. Warfare had fragmented and scattered this large yavusa into smaller ones.²⁰ Likewise, my own yavusa of Nawainovo is found in two vanua in the province of Tailevu. One faction of the yavusa now resides in Matamaivere village, Namara in the Vanua of Bau, and the other resides in Naburenivalu in the vanua of Namena. Kinship ties are still maintained by the two factions. The demarcation of Fiji into provinces after 1874 permanently separated and fragmented yavusa as well as imposing restrictions on the social interaction of its members, especially if members of the same yavusa are located in different provinces.²¹

Outside the level of the yavusa were two other constructs which were political in nature. The first was the “vanua”,²² a geo-political boundary which emerged as a result of warfare and conquest. A number of yavusa constituted a vanua which was ruled by a powerful chief who gained political control within a specific geo-political boundary as a result of conquest. Political control was the major factor in constituting a vanua. Not all vanua were politically independent as there were some which were “qali”²³ to other vanua. This implies that there were some vanua which were under the control of more powerful vanua.

There were attempts to extend vanua control to another level which was a unification of a number of vanua. The “matanitu,”²⁴ or confederacy, was

²⁰ Interview with Ratu Inosi Kuridrani, July 2002 in Namatakula village, Nadroga.

²¹ One of the first tasks of the British colonial government in Fiji was to demarcate the whole of the Fiji group into provinces. This facilitated modern governance in the system of indirect rule.

²² The concept of the vanua includes: the geographical boundary of a specific area; all the resources within this specific boundary; and the socio-political and economic relations within the vanua boundary. In the province of Tailevu in eastern Viti Levu, there are 22 recorded vanua which are controlled by 22 vanua chiefs.

²³ “Qali” means “tied” to or linked with. A vanua which is “qali” to another one is a tributary of the more powerful vanua. See also Williams, T. 1982: 20.

²⁴ The “matanitu” was a very loose form of Fijian state which was found in eastern and northeastern Fiji in the early 1800s.

another political construct beyond the vanua. In eastern and northeastern Fiji, the matanitu as a political construct was understood in terms of a loose form political unity under the control of a powerful chief in a vanua. The matanitu of Kubuna since the early 1800s was controlled by Bauan chiefs like Naulivou, Tanoa, Nailatikau and Cakobau. The actual boundary of the matanitu and the specific relationships which emerged out of it, are now more extensive than they originally were. While eastern Fijian elites on Viti Levu claim that western Fijians belong to either Kubuna or Burebasaga, western Fijians on the other hand argue otherwise; that western Fijians do not belong under any eastern Fijian hierarchy.²⁵ Different scholars writing about Fijian history have stated their own definitions of "matanitu". Routledge defines matanitu as confederations which emerged at the end of the eighteenth century and were formed out of flexible and fragile alliances, requiring them to be held together by a main force.²⁶ The main force in this context refers to a dominant vanua and chief who through war was able to gather allies under his rule.²⁷ Derrick refers to matanitu as kingdoms which were formed out of the unity of a number of vanua through conquests. He further argues that in 1835 natives of Fiji had recognized the existence of thirty two matanitu or confederations in some parts of Fiji. However, the matanitu as large confederations or chiefdoms were unknown in interior and western Viti Levu. The absence of overall chiefs in these parts of Fiji attests to this.²⁸

The absence of a hierarchical form of matanitu as a political construct in western Fiji explains the more egalitarian nature of the various vanua found there. Each vanua had its own socio-political structure and high chief. The presence of a high chief did not imply the rigidity of hierarchy as was the case in eastern and northeastern Fiji. Rather, chiefs in western Fiji were regarded

²⁵ In my interview with Senator Apisai Tora, he reiterated that western Fijians do not belong under eastern Fijian hierarchies. Interview with Senator Apisai Tora, 5 June, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba province.

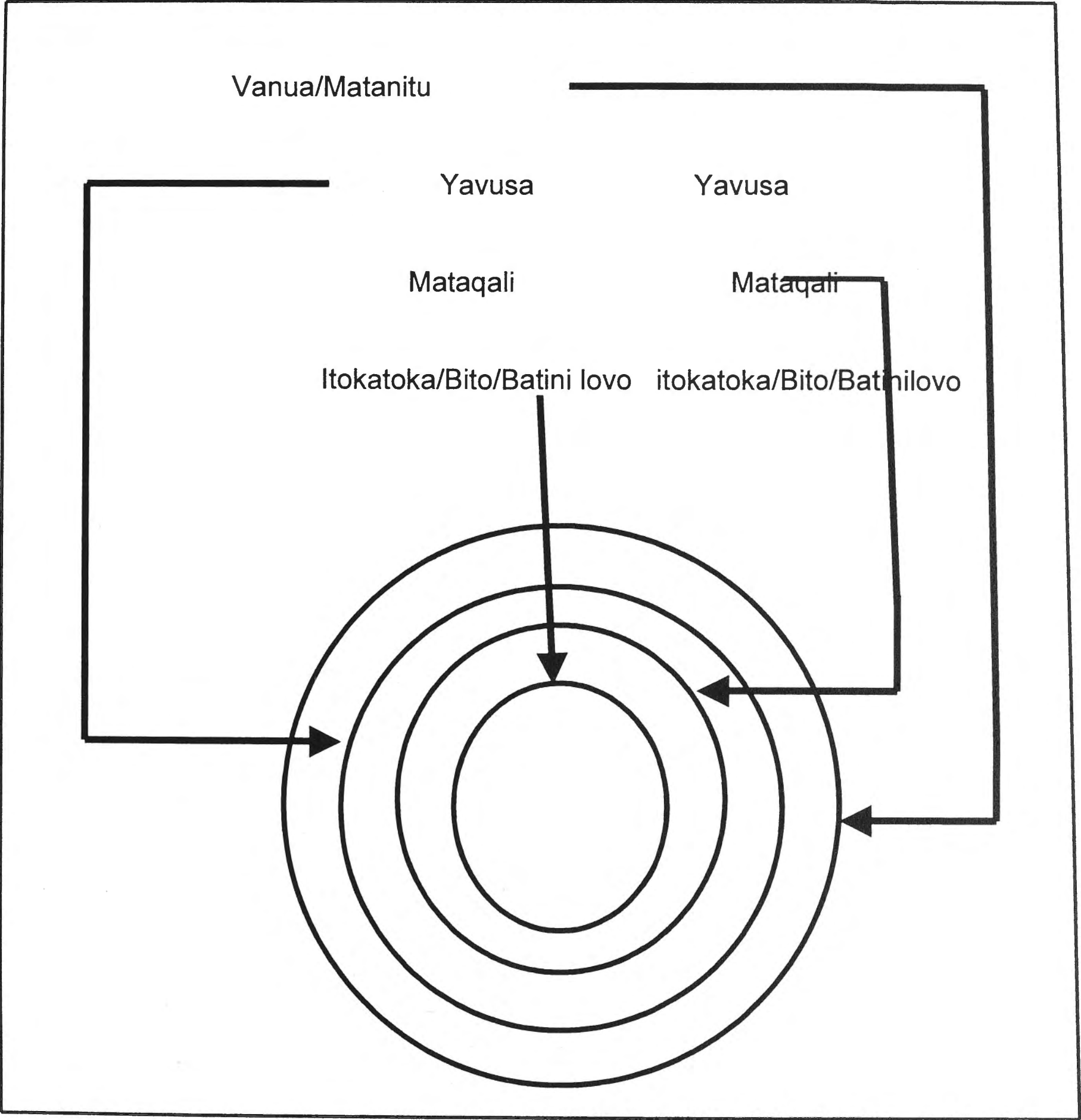
²⁶ Routledge, D. 1985: 28

²⁷ In the attempt to consolidate Bauan supremacy in eastern Fiji, the various Vunivalu of Bau from Tanoa to Cakobau had used various traditional political philosophy to extend their influence. This included the strategic use of women in marriage and its ensuing "vasu" system and also the use of the "vere vaka-Bau" political strategy.

²⁸ Derrick, R. A. 1946. *A History of Fiji. Colony of Fiji* (Vol.1). Government Printer, Colony of Fiji: 9.

more as “first amongst equals” in western Fijian traditional thinking. The diagram below illustrates western Fijian socio-political structures.

Figure 2: Socio-Political Constructs in Western Viti Levu



In western Viti Levu, vanua is also referred to as “matanitu” in some areas since these vanua functioned independently like a matanitu or a loose form of a state.²⁹ Apisai Tora refers to the vanua of Sabeto as the vanua-matanitu of

Sabeto. The formation of a vanua in terms of the integration of a number of yavusa was also achieved through amicable negotiations, apart from warfare. The vanua-matanitu of Sabeto comprised only two yavusa in pre-colonial Fiji. These were Wavuwavu and Waruta. During the period of tribal wars, the elders in the Waruta clan decided to entice another yavusa in the mountains to become a political ally of the yavusa Waruta and hence a member of the vanua of Sabeto. This political negotiation was done with the understanding that the newcomers, members of the yavusa Conua, would become the new leaders in the vanua-matanitu of Sabeto. From then on, the traditional role of “Tui Sabeto”, or overall chief of Sabeto, came from the yavusa Conua.³⁰

In this context the conceptualization of vanua in western and eastern Viti Levu differs according to the nature of the evolution and function of the vanua as a social and political construct. While a number of vanua in eastern Viti Levu were already linked with a higher political order, which was the matanitu in the early 19th century, those in western Viti Levu functioned independently and had not reached the stage of further expansion into matanitu. In the province of Ba of which the vanua-matanitu of Sabeto is a member, all the vanua within the province were (and are) politically independent of each other. This implies that each vanua chief is supreme in his or her own right. The traditional political philosophy which underlies this practice is similar to the political thinking behind the philosophy of “Manu Duitagi” which is practised in the various vanua or chiefdoms in Kadavu. In this philosophy, each chief is regarded as supreme only in his or her own vanua, and the traditional authority of the chief is recognized only by the people who have

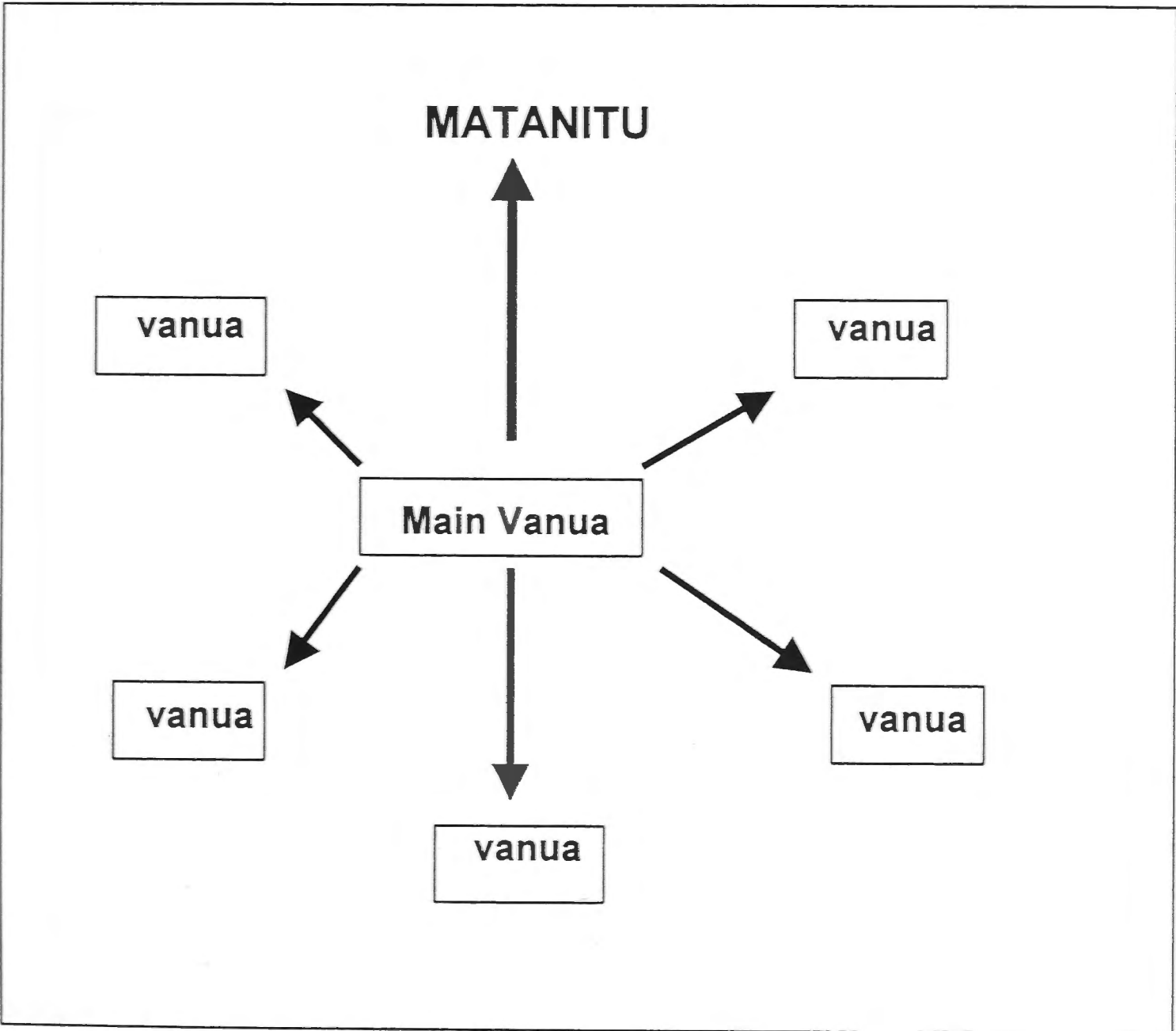
²⁹ Interview with Apisai Tora about the composition of the Vanua-Matanitu of Sabeto in western Viti Levu. June 5, 2002, Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba province.

³⁰ Apisai Tora is a “Turaga ni Yavusa” (head of a clan) and “Turaga ni Mataqali” (head of a sub-clan), in the village of Natalau, Vanua-Matanitu Sabeto in the province of Ba. Interview with Apisai Tora on June 5, 2002 in Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba.

installed him or her.³¹ Such a political philosophy differs from those found in eastern and northern Fiji where by the 1700s, socio-political evolution had advanced to the stage of matanitu- building.

The attempt to build matanitu implied a hierarchy beyond the vanua. It was to some extent an attempt at traditional state-building through the unity of vanua. This unity was maintained by a main force in terms of a leading vanua at the center as shown in the diagram below.

Figure 3: Political Constructs in Eastern/Northeastern Fiji: From Vanua to Matanitu

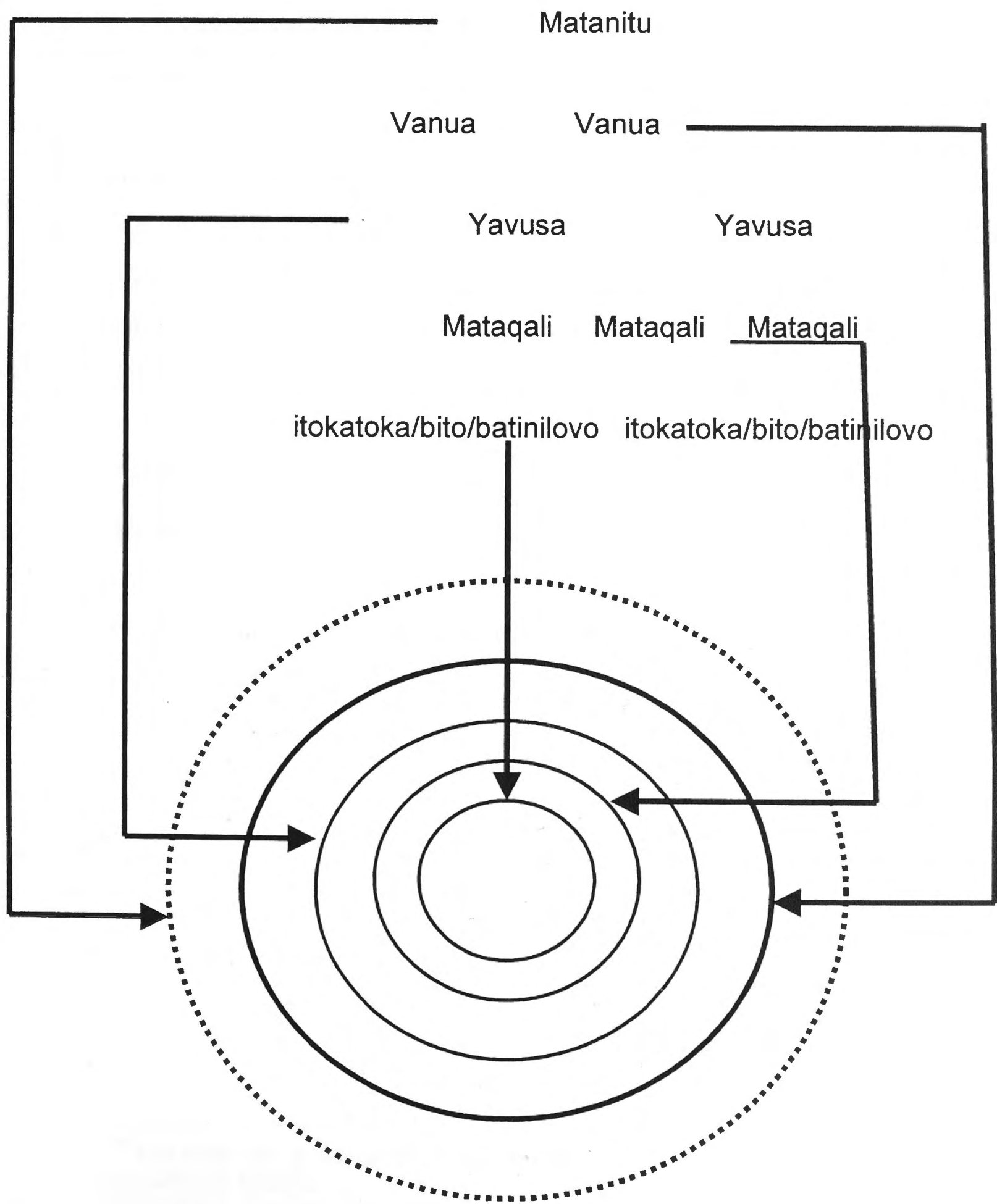


Matanitu or confederation was a very loose form of a state in pre-colonial Fiji. Political evolution in eastern and northeastern Fiji had reached a stage where a number of powerful chiefs were able to unite various vanua under what was

³¹ Interview with Pauliasi Tabulutu of Wailevu, Tavuki, Kadavu, now residing in Australia.

known as matanitu or government or state. Perhaps the most well-known examples of powerful Matanitu in eastern Fiji were Verata, Cakaudrove, Macuata, Rewa, Naitasiri, Bua, Lakeba and Bau. By the 1800s socio-political evolution in eastern and northeastern Fiji had reached the stage which is shown on the diagram below.

Figure 4: Socio-political Constructs in Eastern/northeastern Fiji by the 1800s



Dotted lines are used to denote the matanitu as a political construct because they were still being formed and were not well defined in the 1800s. Moreover, some parts of Fiji, such as the various vanua in western Viti Levu, had not reached the level of hierarchical matanitu formation and had not been influenced by its version in eastern and northeastern Fiji. However, even in eastern Fiji the boundaries of matanitu as a geo-political construct were not a clear demarcation in terms of a clear specification about which vanua were included and the grounds for their inclusion. For instance, the reasoning behind the formation of the Matanitu of “Na Tovata ko Natokalau”,³² the newest Matanitu which was formed by Ma’afu in 1869, did not always augur well amongst all its members. While the people in the vanua of Matuku in southern Lau acknowledged that they were a part of the Matanitu of Tovata, what they refused to admit was that their ancestors were conquered by Ma’afu and his Tongan warriors and subjugated under the matanitu of Tovata.³³ To this day the Matuku people do not wear the Tongan wrap-around mat which northern and central Lauans wear as a symbol of their link with Tonga.

Within the matanitu of Kubuna in eastern Fiji, subtle rivalry between Bau and Verata are still ongoing. Bauan claims to overall traditional leadership in Kubuna and in eastern Fiji are still being challenged by Verata in post-colonial Fijian politics. Verata’s strength lies in the ongoing traditional recognition of her power by various vanua which were under its traditional authority as the most powerful matanitu in eastern Fiji in the period immediately prior to 1800. Verata’s socio-political influence extended throughout Fiji. The vanua of Vitogo in the province of Ba in western Viti Levu claim descent from

³² The Matanitu of “Natovata ko Natokalau” is also known in an abbreviated form as the Matanitu of Tovata.

³³ Interview with Mereseini Senidamanu of Yaroi, Matuku, Lau. June 1, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

Wakanimolikula one of the main founders of the vanua of Verata.³⁴ Further, Verata's influence was also extensive in Vanua Levu, covering the three provinces of Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata. Baba explains:

Ena gauna makawa, me tekivu mai Udu Voidi, era dau muria sobu na gaunisala o ira na qase, na gaunisala o ya e dau kau kina na ivakacavacava. E dau kau kina na isevu ni ka keimami dau tea ena veiyabaki. Na gaunisala o ya e dau vakatokai tu me "gaunisala ni volivoli". Dau cici mai Udu, era dau kila tu na Qase, dau cici sobu me yaco mai Cuku. Keitou kauta sobu na Cuku, kau sobu vua na Vunivalu e Tawake. Sa qai dau cici vakadua sara me yaco I Wailevu. O ratou mai Wailevu e ratou qai dau kauta na ilakolako o ya, vakadua ki na vanua vakaturaga o Verata.³⁵

In the olden days, starting from Udu point in North East Vanua Levu, our ancestors used to follow a road on which tax in the form of produce was transported. This road used to transport the first garden produce of the year. The road was referred to as "gaunisala ni volivoli" or the "trade route". It started from Udu Point, down to Cuku in Saqani. From there, the produce was taken down to the chief of Tawake and from Tawake it was taken to the people of Wailevu. At this point, the people of Wailevu were responsible for transporting the produce to the chiefdom of Verata on Viti Levu.

At this time, the Tui Vuna was supreme on the island of Taveuni. The vanua of Vuna was a political ally of Verata and also of the Roko Tui Bau who was the overall chief in the Bauan Chiefdom prior to his defeat by the Vunivalu of Bau. This was followed by the Bau-Verata War which finally saw to the eclipse of the power of Verata in the early 1800s. The eclipse of Verata resulted also in the decline of the political power of her allies. This is similar to the decline of one civilization and its replacement by another. However, Verata's political influence remained due to her historical role as the point of dispersion of people in parts of Fiji. In the "koro makawa", or old village site of Verata, are old house foundations from which people migrated to northern and eastern Fiji. These included those who migrated to the island of Vanua Levu, including Bua, Rewa, parts of Lau, and internally within Viti Levu.

³⁴ Interview with Ratu Jovesa Sovasova, Turaga Tui Vitogo, 9 November, 2002. Vitogo village, Ba.

³⁵ Interview with Professor Tupeni Baba. 8 February, 2002. Suva, Fiji. See also Sayes, S. A. 1982. Cakaudrove: Ideology and Reality in a Fijian Confederation. PhD Thesis. The Australian National University, Canberra.

Vanua Politics: A case study of Namena in north eastern Viti Levu

The vanua of Namena in the province of Tailevu was once linked to the Matanitu of Verata prior to its decline. The dynamics which leads to the formation of a vanua as a geo-political boundary is best understood in terms of power rivalry amongst ambitious chiefs. This implies that socio-political boundaries within a geographical area were flexible in as far as competition and rivalry were concerned. Powerful chiefs through victories in wars continually defined geo-political boundaries and influenced the dynamics of socio-political and economic relations within their areas of jurisdiction. Belshaw confirms this point when he argues that:

the social structure itself was not a fixed and permanent thing, but rather the representation of flexible and competitive processes...Control over land in the sense in which social groups can give effect to it, is thus itself a flexible thing, dependent on the political power and social status of the group in question.³⁶

The formation and consolidation of a vanua involved the unification of once independent yavusa or clans to form a larger political unit which was controlled by a main force and in most or all cases was a leading yavusa. The recognition of the power of the leading clan legitimated its customary authority as the basis of its leadership.

The formation of the vanua of Namena, which is one of the twenty-two vanua in the province of Tailevu, involved the unification of a number of independent yavusa.³⁷ Although leadership within the vanua had been changing prior to colonization, the vanua itself as a geo-political entity had existed for a much longer period prior to European contact. Evidence of this is seen in customary practices which are specific to the vanua and in the presence and usage of a distinct dialect, the “vosa vaka-Namena” with some words like “utu” or run and “kea” or say, being unique to the Namena dialect.³⁸ The development and

³⁶ Belshaw, C. S. 1964. *Under the Ivi Tree: Society and Economic Growth in Rural Fiji*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London: 186.

³⁷ See also Seruvakula, S. 2000. *Bula Vakavanua*. Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva: 159-162.

³⁸ The “Vosa vaka-Namena” or the Namena dialect is one of the approximately five hundred dialects found in the Fiji group. Due to the geographical location of Namena in north eastern Viti Levu, close to the east and west divide, the Namena dialect uses words from both the eastern and western main dialects. While the people of Namena observe the hierarchies of

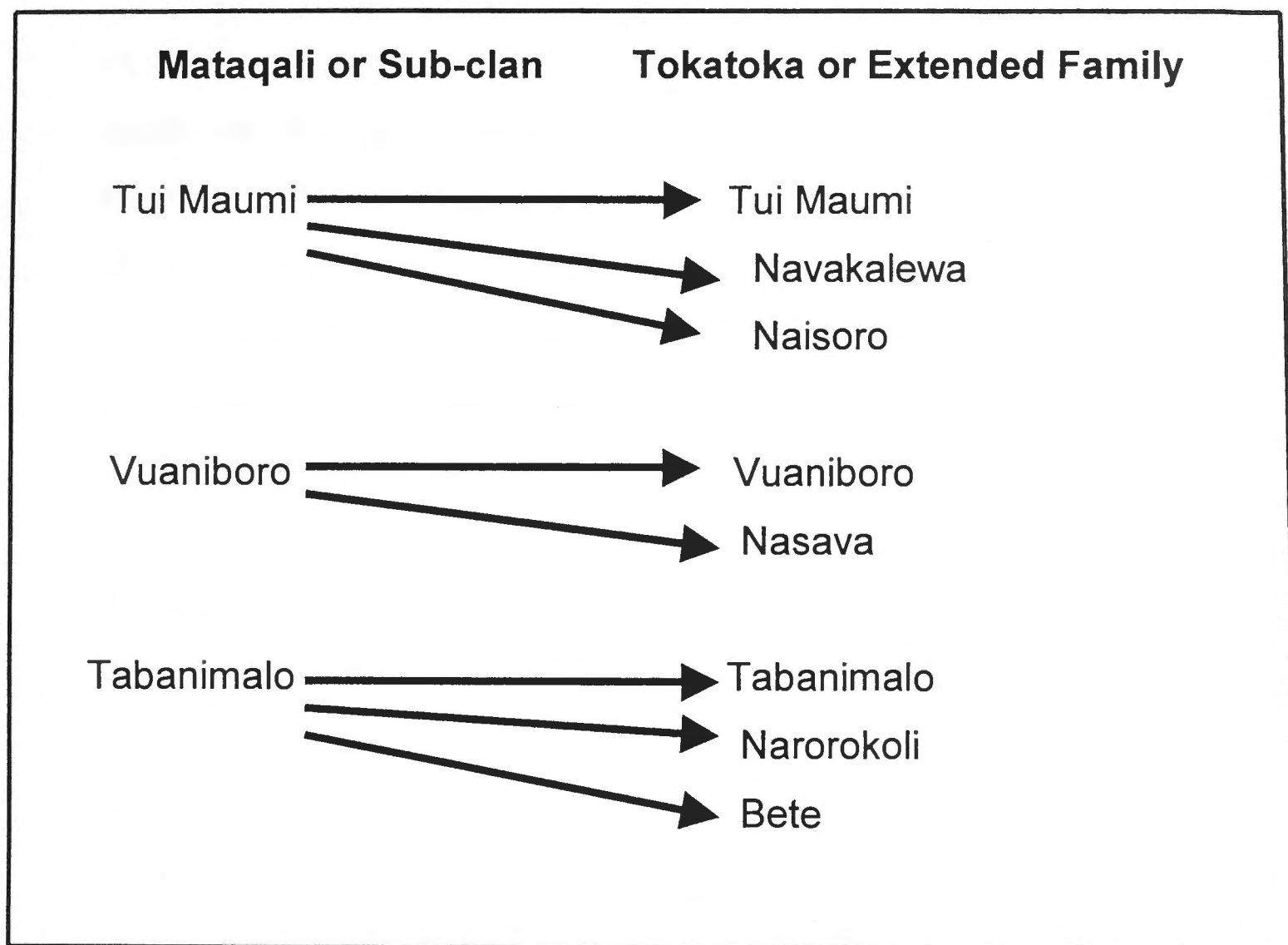
usage of a distinct dialect is testimony that the vanua of Namena must have evolved in isolation for a long period of time.

The "Tukutuku Raraba" of the Vanua of Namena, states that the leading ancestral God of the most powerful yavusa or clan of Tui Nawainovo was Ratu Rogolevu. It also relates the founding of the leading yavusa of Nawainovo by the God Duanikutubuta and his wife Lewavai. After their migration from the Nakauvadra mountains in Ra, they made their first village in Nawainovo in Dawasamu in the northern part of the province of Tailevu, a place which now borders with the province of Ra. Duanikutubuta and Lewavai had two sons, Masitabua whose yavu or house foundation was known as "Naisauto" and Masiyarayara whose yavu or house foundation was "Tabanaicobo". From these yavu emerged two mataqali or sub-clan which are part of the yavusa or clan of Tui Nawainovo.³⁹ The diagram below illustrates the social divisions which had evolved from the two yavu of Naisauto and Tabanaicobo.

eastern Fiji, they can also be very egalitarian in their attitudes. This is a direct reflection of the settlement of the vanua by western Viti Levu migrants.

³⁹ See "A itukutuku Raraba ni Veiyavusa ena Veitikina Yadua: Namena". 1930. Native Lands Commission, Suva Fiji: 310.

Figure 5: The Yavusa or clan of Tui Nawainovo



During the reign of the Matanitu of Verata, chiefly leadership within the Tui Nawainovo clan was controlled by the Vuaniboro sub-clan. This leadership was later succeeded by the Tui Maumi sub-clan, a later migrant into the vanua of Namena. This sub-clan controlled leadership in Namena from the 1800s until today.

Leadership of the yavusa Tui Nawainovo was once assumed by the Mataqali Vuaniboro under the then Tui Nawainovo, Nalivakalou. A conflict at the old village site caused the yavusa to move twice along the coast until they reached the present village site. These movements had taken place at a time when there were other yavusa or clans which had already existed in the vanua of Namena but had been living independently on their own land. These included Sawatini, Macoi, Tuikoro, Roko Tui Nabati, Dere, Nagele, Naicula, Tai and Vatuou. These clans had migrated to the sites which they had occupied within Namena from different locations and at different times. The Yavusa Roko Tui Nabati for instance, was part of the Naboutini clan of

Waimaro. The Yavusa Macoi had migrated to Namena from Verata and was part of the large yavusa Macoi of Verata.⁴⁰

Histories of migrations play a crucial role in people's identity. They explain relations amongst members of different socio-political groups. Distinct migration stories of each yavusa, for example, highlight not only the diversity of history but also the challenge of trying to impose control amongst those who live in a geo-political boundary. Within a yavusa, vanua, or matanitu, subtle or outright rivalry and dissent amongst members are a hallmark of traditional Fijian politics.

Complete unification within the vanua of Namena occurred after the arrival of the yavusa Natauya from Korotiki in the vanua of Saivou in Ra. This clan was under the leadership of Nagalu, a warrior chief.⁴¹ Nagalu's success in waging wars finally resulted in his recognition by the then vanua leader of Namena, Dretiverata, as the new Tui Nawainovo. This resulted in the passing of the leadership role from one mataqali to another within the Yavusa of Nawainovo. Descendants of Nagalu, who emerged from the yavu of Navakalewa, have been overall chiefs in the vanua of Namena from the early 1800s to the present time.⁴² Nagalu took over leadership of the vanua of Namena at a time which coincided with the rise of Bau and the gradual eclipse of the Verata chiefdom. Prior to this, the vanua of Namena was aligned with the Matanitu of Verata.

The shift in political control and allegiance from Verata to Bau had implications for the vanua of Namena when the centre of power shifted from Verata to Bau. The two competing households in the Yavusa Tui Nawainovo of Namena, Naisauto and Navakalewa, had competing allegiances outside Namena. Naisauto, which had political control during the reign of the Matanitu of Verata, declined with the eclipse of Verata. Navakalewa, which emerged

⁴⁰ See "*A iTukutuku Raraba ni Veitikina Yadua: Namena*". 1930. Native Lands Commission. Suva, Fiji: 310-339.

⁴¹ See Derrick, R. A. 1946: 110.

⁴² See "*A itukutuku Raraba ni Veiyavusa Ena Veitikina: Namena*". 1930. Native Lands Commission, Suva, Fiji: 310-339.

during the reign of the Bauan chiefdom, maintained closer links with the yavusa Tui Kaba of Bau. The political fortune of Navakalewa, like that of other chiefly households aligned to Bau at that time, was consolidated with the arrival of Christianity and Fiji's final cession to Great Britain. Nagalu, the ultimate unifier of the vanua of Namena, and also a signatory to Fiji's first offer of cession to Great Britain in 1858, was a product of the Navakalewa line. His involvement in warfare in various vanua outside of his own, including Bau, earned him the reputation of a warrior chief. His power was consolidated by his acceptance of Christianity which came to Namena through Bau.

Nagalu unified a number of independent yavusa into the vanua of Namena. He did this mostly through warfare. Being a polygamous chief, his political network was strengthened through marriage. Nagalu's principal wife, Adi Salote, was from the rival yavu of Naisauto in the sub-clan of Vuaniboro. Marriage was a traditional Fijian political strategy used by powerful chiefs to pacify and unite rival households as well as extend kinship with its social relations and obligations. In times of warfare, polygamous chiefs like Nagalu utilized the kinship system, including those that they had created through their many wives to solicit political support.

Nagalu negotiated and extended political relations within the vanua of Namena to a further stage through his constant involvement as both a friend and a foe to Ratu Seru Cakobau, the Vunivalu of Bau, who finally ceded Fiji to Great Britain with other chiefs in 1874. Cakobau's political ascendancy in eastern Fiji owed a lot to chiefs like Nagalu who contributed warriors in times of war. Although Cakobau often asked for his support in war, Nagalu's political power and influence was at the same time feared by Cakobau.

Derrick explains that:

On 12th March, [1854], Nagalu, the chief of Namena ...arrived at Bau with reinforcements totaling six hundred warriors; but Cakobau's forces were less than he had expected, for five hundred others, promised and expected, had been bribed by Koroï Ravulo⁴³ to stay away on the pretext of home defence, while other chiefs, though loyal, feared an attack in the rear, should they leave for Bau, and stayed at home. The assault [on Kaba], was made on the 27th March. Of the two thousand warriors, scarcely three hundred did any fighting...Cakobau, now resorted to tactics in which he was more adept, and he induced Nagalu to simulate disloyalty and offer to join Koroï Ravulo. But that experienced warrior was not so easily deceived, and sent a Sawakasa⁴⁴ chief to the parley; and as he expected, the man did not return. Three days later the Bau fleet and army made a combined sea and land attack on Sawakasa; but this, too, was a complete failure.⁴⁵

In the decisive 1854 Battle of Kaba, Nagalu's warriors were amongst those of other chiefs, including Tongans, sent by King George Tupou I to help Cakobau.

Socio-Political Relations Within the Vanua of Namena

Within the vanua of Namena, traditional links to Bau are still maintained and includes a "Mata ki Bau"⁴⁶ who is Tui Nawainovo's traditional envoy to Bau.⁴⁷ The mata ki Bau normally goes through to the Tui Kaba clan⁴⁸ through the chiefly household of "koya mai Mataidrekeiviwa"⁴⁹, the leader of the "Tui Kaba e ra" clan or a faction of the leading Tui Kaba clan. Also present in the village is a traditional representative to the Ratu mai Verata. The office of this Mata declined with the decline of the Verata chiefdom, although kinship ties are still

⁴³ Koroï Ravulo was a chief of Bau

⁴⁴ Sawakasa which is part of the vanua of Waimaro Levulevu, is a neighbouring vanua to Namena. The people of Waimaro are the "Bati" or warrior clan of the Vunivalu of Bau.

⁴⁵ Derrick, R.A. 1946: 110.

⁴⁶ The modern equivalence of the traditional "Mata" or representative is an envoy or a diplomat. They are the "official" messengers between vanua which recognize each other's political power. The "Mata ki Bau" is present in all vanua which has some significant socio-political ties to the Vanua of Bau and the matanitu of Kubuna. In eastern Fiji each vanua within the matanitu of Kubuna has a "mata ki Bau" or Bauan envoy as well as a "mata ki Verata" or Verata envoy. In this context relations amongst people in such defined boundaries adhere to customary protocols.

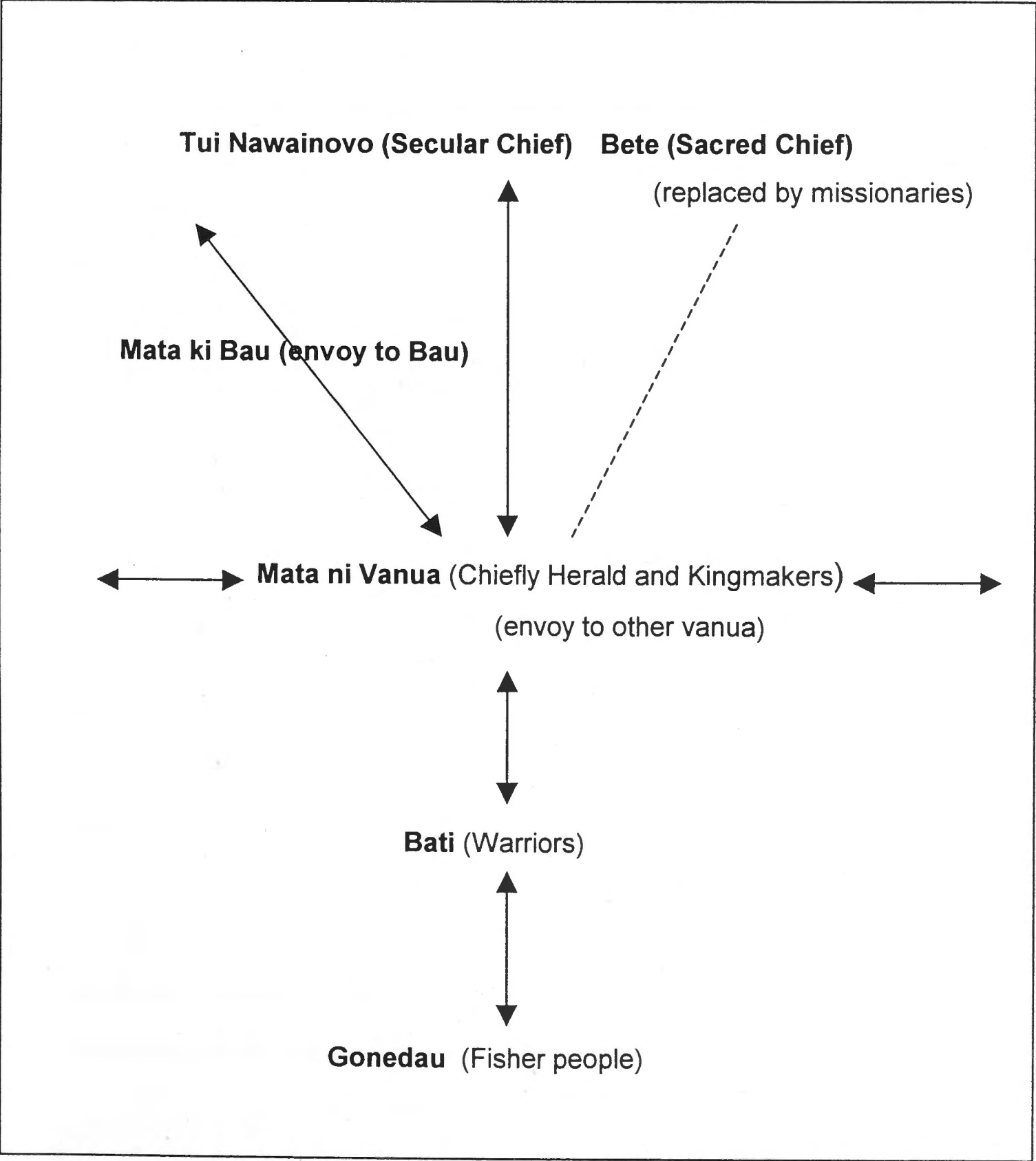
⁴⁷ For the role of traditional envoys in Tailevu, see also Macnaught, T. J. 1975. Mainstream to Millpond: The Fijian Political Experience. PhD Thesis, The Australian National University Canberra: 99-100.

⁴⁸ The Yavusa Tui Kaba is the leading Yavusa on Bau island and in the chiefdom or vanua of Bau as well as in the Matanitu of Kubuna.

⁴⁹ This is the chiefly title given to the leader of the "Tui Kaba e ra" clan on Bau. Ratu Meli Verebalavu, the late Tui Nawainovo in the vanua of Namena, explained that there are at least three recognised high chiefs on the island of Bau who command people or "vaka-tamata". These are the holder of the Vunivalu and Tui Kaba title; the holder of the Roko Tui Bau title; and "koya Mai Mataidrekeiviwa", leader of the "Tui Kaba e ra" clan.

recognised and maintained between Namena and Verata. Also present in the Vanua of Namena is a “mata” or envoy who takes messages to the vanua of Dawasamu, a neighbouring vanua to Namena. The “Ratu mai Dawasamu” or chief of the vanua of Dawasamu, is subservient to Namena and cannot relay messages straight to the Vunivalu clan in Bau but has to go through the Mata ki Bau of the Tui Nawainovo in Namena. Likewise, messages from the Vunivalu of Bau goes through the “mata ki Bau” in Namena to reach the “Ratu mai Dawasamu” and also other chiefs in the vanua of Namena. The diagram below illustrates the different traditional roles and offices in the vanua of Namena.

Figure 6: Customary Roles in the Vanua of Namena



The office of the “Mata” or envoy in the context of a vanua can be likened to the office of a diplomatic representative in the western world. The Fijian Mata, though he lives in his own vanua, takes messages across to other vanua which have established formal ties. These are inherited roles.

The traditional roles of other Yavusa or clan members living in other villages or settlements within the vanua are linked to those in the leading village. This implies that there is a customary or traditional link amongst all members of a vanua. From a functionalist perspective, each vanua member has a role to play in the maintenance of the whole. For example, the mataqali of the “mata ni vanua”, or chiefly herald, is also known as the sub-clan of the “Sau Turaga” or the “King makers”, that is, their traditional role is to consult and decide on who is the most suitable to hold the chiefly title. Apart from the office of the “mata” or envoy, there are other traditional roles within the vanua itself.

The people of Namena also have traditional relationships with other vanua within the province of Tailevu, in the larger matanitu of Kubuna as well as other vanua and matanitu outside of Kubuna. “Tauvu” relationships are maintained with the people of Welagi in Taveuni in the province of Cakaudrove; Nawaikama in Gau in the province of Lomaiviti; Kaba, Namata, Maumi and Mokani in the Vanua of Bau in the province of Tailevu.⁵⁰ There are various clans within the vanua of Namena which also have a special relationship, similar to the “tauvu” relationship, which was known as “veitabani” with other clans in other vanua within the province of Tailevu and within the matanitu of Kubuna. For example, the yavusa Macoi and the yavusa Nabulebulewa in the vanua of Namena have a “veitabani” relationship. Additionally, both Macoi and Nabulebulewa have the same relationship with the yavusa Waimaro of Tailevu and Naitasiri provinces.

Another special type of relationship emphasizing ancient customs and involving a taboo relationship is practised amongst the different vanua in the Matanitu of Kubuna. This involves sanctions in terms of “veitabui” or a taboo

or restrictions placed on the consumption of certain food as well as physical contact for those in this special taboo relationship. The people of Namena have this relationship with the vanua of Vugalei and Tai-Vugalei in the provinces of Tailevu and Naitasiri. In the vanua of Namena itself, this “veitabui” or taboo relationship is maintained between the yavusa Nawainovo and the yavusa Tai who were once part of the larger yavusa of Tai-Vugalei.

Between the vanua of Namena and Vugalei and Tai-Vugalei, the Namena people are forbidden to consume certain types of seafood in the presence of their “tabu” because they are coastal people, therefore in the presence of their “tabu” they are not allowed to consume what is in abundance in their vanua. Likewise, the people of Vugalei and Tai-Vugalei are not allowed to consume food such as pork in the presence of the Namena people. Physical contact is restricted and marriage and other intimate types of relationships are also forbidden in such cases. These ancient customs are still being practised in the matanitu of Kubuna.

The observations of such ancient customs and practices cement kinship bonds amongst people within a vanua or in different vanua and matanitu. In modern Fiji these special types of social relations are cultivated as the basis to found and promote modern organizations like membership of political parties. The Nationalist Vanua Tako-Lavo⁵¹ party utilized the ancient customs within the kinship network in certain areas in inland Viti Levu to attract political support.

Despite the maintenance of social order and the acceptance and observation of socio-political relations, there are subtle forms of conflicts and rivalries amongst members of different clans and sub-clans within the vanua of

⁵⁰ This is a special type of relationship amongst people of some vanua and is derived from the close relationship of the ancestral Gods of the vanua involved.

⁵¹ “Tako-Lavo” is a special type of relationship which recognizes alternative generations and is a form of identity amongst the inland tribes of Viti Levu; this includes both western and eastern inland tribes. It emphasizes the closeness of kinship and blood ties when alternate generations identify with each other. A child and his grandfather belong to the same generation and refer to each other as “Tako”. The child’s father and his grandfather call each other “Lavo”.

Namena. This can be explained historically in terms of ongoing competition for power and other types of conflicts which emerged since the early attempts to form a vanua. In the clan of Tui Nawainovo, competition for power between the Tui Maumi and Vuaniboro sub-clans has been ongoing since the early 1800s when political power passed from the Vuaniboro to the Tui Maumi sub-clan. These conflicts and rivalries are not peculiar to the the vanua of Namena, but happen in other vanua as well. They form the modern basis for political conflict and rivalry. In the colonial and post-colonial period, this can be seen in the support for different political parties in the period of party politics.

The Politics of Religion: from the Fijian “Lotu” to Christianity

Traditional Fijian Lotu⁵² was abolished with the introduction of Christianity. The practice of Fijian Lotu was a localised affair in the sense that each clan had its own god with their own form of worship. A major socio-political impact of the introduction of Christianity on Fijian society was its abolition of some traditional roles. The role of the “Bete”, or Sacred chief, who was the mediator between the Fijian people and their Gods was abolished since this role was assumed by the missionaries. The traditional role of the sacred chief was a crucial one. Important functions depended on the sanction of the Fijian gods through the Bete as a medium. These included the waging of wars and the performance of important ceremonies.

The power of the sacred chief balanced the power of the Vunivalu who was the Warlord, or secular chief. The abolition of the role of the Bete created a power imbalance as well as power vacuum in the overall Fijian political structure. This resulted in the total control of political power by one office, that of the Vunivalu. Furthermore, within Fijian society, the traditional role of the Bete became defunct and descendants of those who inherited the role to this crucial office do not play the traditional religious role in modern Fiji.

⁵² Lotu in Fijian refers to the act of worship. Since the arrival of Christianity, the word lotu now refers to the Christian religion.

Christianity stabilized chiefly rule in Fiji. Missionaries arrived at a time of chiefly rivalry in eastern and northeastern Fiji. Campbell explains:

Fiji in the years of the beche-de-mer trade (1825-35 and 1842-50) became increasingly enmeshed in warfare between the great matanitu or kingdoms. Bau strove to extend and reinforce its influence over the islands in and around the Koro Sea; Rewa maintained its hegemony over eastern Viti Levu; and the northern states of Bua and Macuata tried to assert their independence. Into this complicated and confusing chaos of warfare and competing manoeuvring came missionaries in 1835, the response of the Wesleyan mission in Tonga to requests from various Fijian chiefs.⁵³

The spread of Christianity from Tonga to Tubou in Lakeba and then to Viwa and Bau had socio-political influences for the chiefs concerned and later for Fijian society at large. It began with the conversion of the Tui Nayau⁵⁴ in 1849. The plight of the Tui Nayau was enhanced with his conversion, for through the help of Tongans, an attack by Cakobau, who was still a pagan, was evaded when Cakobau realized that he was no match for the Tongans. It was not until Cakobau realized that his chiefdom of Bau was gradually losing in the Bau-Rewa war of the early 1850s, that he finally acceded to Christianity. Tonga's contribution to the Battle of Kaba in February, 1855 was done under the agreement that Cakobau was to be a Christian convert afterwards.⁵⁵ The spread of Christianity in Fiji, therefore, served a number of purposes. The dissemination of the gospel aided converted chiefs to extend their sphere of influence through this newly introduced religion.

Christianity became a new source of power for the chiefs as well as for the missionaries. On one hand, the missionaries had succeeded the Bete, the sacred chief, who was the link between people and their gods. The missionary's role was assimilated into Fijian society and has evolved as part of Fijian culture since 1835. Instead of worshipping many different gods, after

⁵³ Campbell, I.C. 1990: 91.

⁵⁴ The Tui Nayau, prior to the arrival of Christianity in Fiji, was supreme ruler only in the Lakeba group of islands in the Lau group. This includes the islands in the middle of the Lau group, surrounding Lakeba. They are Lakeba, Nayau, Moce, Vulaga, and Oneata. After the Christian wars, in which Ma'afu and Tongan warriors helped the Tui Nayau, the whole of the Lau group was brought under the leadership of the Tui Nayau. Northern Lau or Vanua Balavu was once governed by the Tui Cakau. Southern Lau which includes Moala, Matuku, Totoya, Vanuavatu, and Ono-I-Lau were independent chiefdoms.

⁵⁵ Campbell, I.C. 1990: 92.

1835 the Fijians focused on and worshipped one God. The acceptance of Christianity marked the beginning of modern unification in Fiji.

On the other hand, the position of reigning chiefs was strengthened by the arrival of Christianity. Since the missionaries needed chiefly blessings to get to their people, they supported the chiefs in spreading the gospel. Cakobau's political ambition, for instance, was greatly facilitated through the spread of Christianity to chiefs and people in different vanua throughout Fiji founded a new social network. The extension of the gospel from the centre of power to vanua chiefs strengthened the power of chiefs both at the center and in the vanua. Since 1835, Christianity in the form of Methodism, has played a major role in shaping Fijian political thinking.

Christianity in Fiji first became known as "Lotu Tonga" as Christianity came to Fiji through Tonga. Later it became known as "a lotu I Ratu Cakobau" or Ratu Cakobau's religion because it was through him that Methodism was spread to much of Fiji. Furthermore, Christian wars known as "a ivalu ni lotu" were also waged on those who refused to accept the new Christian religion. Christianity as a religion consolidated the political supremacy of Cakobau and the Bauan chieftdom in eastern and northeastern Fiji. The philosophy of "rarama" or "light", which was the backbone of the extension of the Christian gospel, was propelled by chiefs like Cakobau in their pursuit of political control. Christianity assumed that Fijians needed "rarama", or light, to take them out of "butobuto" or "darkness" in which they had lived for thousands of years. Pre-Christian Fijian culture with its own form of knowledge and rationality was viewed as "gauna ni butobuto"; the era of darkness, thus justifying the need for the new religion within Fijian society. Calvert, as quoted in Routledge, argues that:

This long neglected and deeply degraded people have excited much Christian sympathy, expense and effort...[but at last there has come a belief that] long and established principles and precedents are giving way; the entrance of God's word are spreading light...⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Routledge, D. (ed). 1994. *The Fiji and New Caledonia Journals of Mary Wallis 1851-1853*. Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva, Fiji and Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts, USA: xii.

The translation of the Bible into the Bauan dialect and later its incorporation in the system of education as introduced by the missionaries, was a modern means of extending Bauan power through Christianity and the Bauan dialect. Bau was regarded not only as the leading political power in eastern Fiji but through her embrace of a new religion, she was regarded as a leading power that introduced “rarama” or light to the whole of Fiji. This became a most powerful psycho-political tool for “internal colonialism” as Bauan power through the sanction and nationalization of her dialect and the Christian religion became recognised all over Fiji. What the traditional weaponry like clubs and spears could not achieve for Bauan warriors was later achieved through the use of their dialect by the missionaries and after 1874 through the dominance of Bauan chiefs in the colonial government. When the colonizers arrived in Fiji, they already had a leading light in Bau to help them.

After the Battle of Kaba and the conversion of Ratu Seru Cakobau to Christianity, Bauan political ascendancy in eastern and northeastern Fiji as well as her political influence over the rest of Fiji was further extended and consolidated. This accounts for the important role that Christianity played in Fijian politics in later years. Missionaries replaced the role of the Bete and traditional Fijian religion and fitted into the Fijian socio-political culture as an authentic Fijian institution.

From Fiji to Tonga and vice versa: Tongan Political Influence in Eastern Fiji

Fiji's contact and relations with Tonga began with the settlement of the islands. In eastern and northeastern Fiji, the outside language which had a significant influence amongst eastern Fijian dialects, especially the Lauan dialects, is the Tongan language. This influence resulted from the geographical proximity of the Lau islands to Tonga. Lakeba is only 180 miles west of Vavau in northern Tonga and this short distance enabled frequent contact between Lakeba and Tonga.⁵⁷ While there was contact between

⁵⁷ See Reid, A. C. 1977. “The Fruit of the Rewa: Oral Traditions and the Growth of Pre-Christian Lakeba” in *The Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 12 (1-2). Oxford University Press: 3-10.

eastern and northeastern Fiji and Tonga well before the arrival of Europeans, it became more frequent with the arrival of the missionaries in Tubou, Lakeba in 1835, accompanied by an emissary of King George Tupou I of Tonga.

Enele Ma'afu'otui'tonga,⁵⁸ a cousin of King George Tupou I, was sent in 1847 to look after the affairs of all Tongan residents in the Lau group. Contact between Lau and Tonga was so frequent and intense in the mid-1800s that in 1869, the first Tui Lau to be installed was the Tongan aristocrat, Ma'afu. Campbell explains that:

Ma'afu was the son of Aleamotu'a, the late Tui Kanokupolu of Tonga...and was thus a cousin of King George...Ma'afu himself had come to Fiji in 1847...In 1853 George appointed him to govern the Tongans in Fiji, a charge which Ma'afu exploited to emerge soon after as Cakobau's most dangerous rival. Thus the mission had a powerful (if sometimes embarrassing) ally, and Ma'afu the chief had a network of subtle and effective agents in the mission teachers and their converts.⁵⁹

Derrick describes the conquest of Matuku in 1853 by Ma'afu and Vuetasau, a Lakeba chief, as an embarrassment to the mission in Lakeba. Ma'afu's personal ambition to extend his power and control in Fiji was camouflaged under the pretext of protecting the Tongan missionaries stationed in Matuku. Lyth, the missionary based in Lakeba, expelled both Ma'afu and Vuetasau from membership of the church as a result of this incident.⁶⁰

However, Ma'afu's political ambition continued, resulting in the bestowing of a title in Lau. His installation as the first Tui Lau complemented the traditional Fijian title of the Tui Nayau, whose traditional domain at this time was the island of Lakeba and islands of Central Lau, except Vanua Balavu, which was under the traditional leadership of the Tui Cakau.

⁵⁸ Enele Ma'afu'otui'tonga or Ma'afu, arrived in Fiji to look after Tongan affairs in the Lau group. A man of intense political ambition, it was generally believed amongst Tongans and Fijians that Ma'afu's mission to Fiji was a deliberate ploy by King George Tupou I as he was a rival to the title which he held; that of Tui Kanokupolu and King of Tonga. His ambitious political involvement in most of Fiji. Between 1847 and 1874 proved the hypothesis to be somehow, true. If Ma'afu failed to unite Fiji, like George Tupou I as the first King of a united Tonga, at least he succeeded in uniting Lau through Christianity, through being installed as the first "Tui Lau" in 1869, and through being the only Lauan chief to sign the Deed of Cession in 1874.

⁵⁹ Campbell, I.C. 1990: 92.

⁶⁰ See Derrick, R.A. 1946: 129.

In the period leading up to cession, Tonga's influence in eastern and northeastern Fiji through Ma'afu had caused concern to both the British and the Bauan chiefdom as both became suspicious of a Tongan plot, through Ma'afu, to annex Fiji. Their suspicion was based on Tonga's extensive influence not only in the Lau group but also in other parts of eastern Fiji as well such as part of Nadroga in western Fiji.⁶¹ By 1867, Ma'afu, who was representing Lau, had collaborated with the chiefdoms of Bua and Cakaudrove on the island of Vanua Levu to establish the "Matanitu ni Tovata ko Natokalau", or the Tovata Confederacy.⁶²

The most outstanding implication of the eastern Fijian and Polynesian contact was its impact on eastern and northeastern Fijian culture which resulted in the evolution of hierarchical types of chiefdoms with culture that emphasized gradations of social rank. The Polynesian culture that evolved in eastern and northeastern Fiji was responsible for the frequent internal competition for power resulting in warfare which was aimed at extending frontiers or boundaries. Political constructs such as the vanua and the matanitu evolved out of this political thinking, that is, the need to extend physical boundaries in order to secure geo-political control and resource manipulation.

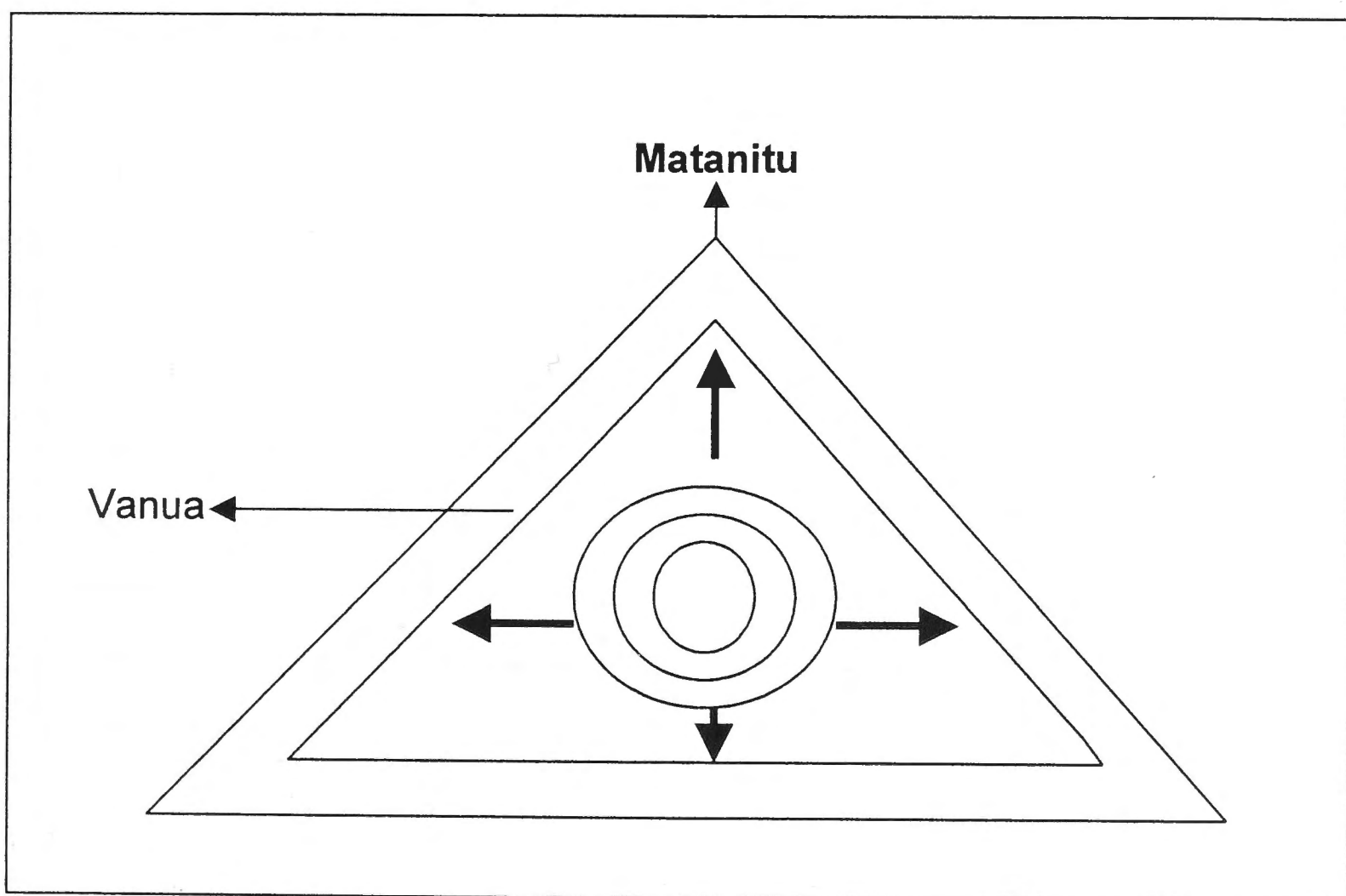
Frontier extension implied, first and foremost, control of physical and human resources. Resource control was the material basis of Fijian chiefly power and it was the driving force behind the extension of social units from purely kinship relations to political relations within the context of constructs like the vanua and the matanitu. While the various vanua in western Fiji had mostly revolved around the maintenance of the kinship system, their counterparts in eastern Fiji, because of their frequent contact with their "resource scarce" Polynesian neighbours to the east, had been exposed to the "empire-building philosophy".

⁶¹ See "Abstract of papers in Possession of the Government Connected with Ma'afu's Claim to "Nadroga", National Archives of Fiji, Reference No. F1/12(a) – (d): 1-7.

⁶² In 1867, the first attempt to establish the Tovata Confederacy, which consisted of the provinces of Bua, Cakaudrove, and Lau (Vanua Balavu), had failed. See also Spurway, J.

The various waves of Europeans found eastern and northeastern chiefdoms in this state and the chiefdoms' quest for power control was further exacerbated by competition for European goods. These were regarded as crucial to extending physical frontiers and spheres of influence. Figure 4 illustrates the extension of power from the kinship structures (itokatoka, Mataqali and Yavusa) to the political structural hierarchies (Vanua and Matanitu).

Figure 7: The Extension of Power from Kinship to Socio-political Constructs



The circles in the middle of the triangles represent the kinship system from the itokatoka, mataqali and yavusa. The two triangles represent the extension of power of a hierarchical nature from vanua to matanitu. This union was the foundation of the Fijian political system and it emphasized the important link between “blood” through kinship and political power through bravery in warfare. The Fijian political system, therefore, is all-encompassing as it is founded on socio-political structures upon which Fijian culture is grounded. In

“Hiki Mo e Faliki”, Why Ma’afu Brought His Floor Mats to Fiji in 1847, in *The Journal of Pacific*

the Fijian rational world, politics is all-pervasive in the sense that “everything is grounded in politics”. Politics is reflected in the choice of one’s spouse at the level of the “itokatoka” or extended family, and ends at the level of the vanua or matanitu with subtle or outright conflict, dissent and rivalry.

Matanitu Politics and the Rise of Powerful Eastern and Northeastern Chiefdoms (1800 – 1873)

Socio-political evolution within Fijian society involved an inter-link of kinship relationships and political alliances from the itokatoka to the level of matanitu in places where matanitu had evolved. While political practices varied throughout Fiji by the 1800s, however, the highest political construct which had been in evolution at this time was the matanitu. By 1800, the geo-political boundaries of vanua in Fiji were well defined whereas the matanitu boundaries, at least in eastern and parts of northern Fiji, were still in a state of political fluidity as warfare to determine these was taking place.

In Western Viti Levu, vanua and matanitu formation and evolution had been an internal matter and the two political constructs had consolidated and remained in isolation for long periods of time. This gave rise to more egalitarian vanua-matanitu. The opportunity to extend the geo-political boundaries of the vanua-matanitu into larger ones was unknown. In eastern and northern Fiji, Confederacies like the matanitu of Verata had evolved through the pre-contact period with extensive geo-political influence. Verata’s power and influence was altered through the contribution of rifles which were introduced by Europeans. Other matanitu like Kubuna evolved through the pre-contact and post-contact period with their consolidation happening more in the post-contact period. Others still, like the Tovata Confederacy, which is the most recent in Fiji, was established by Ma’afu in the 1860s.⁶³ However, the roots for the consolidation of the matanitu of Tovata extended beyond the pre-contact period through frequent contact with Polynesian chiefdoms, especially that of Tonga. This contributed to the knowledge of “traditional bureaucracy” in terms of leadership within a hierarchy in the eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefdoms. The ideology of hierarchy and order in terms

of leadership which was inbuilt in traditional bureaucracy contributed to easy acceptance and recognition of modern leadership after the establishment of the colonial state.

The evolution and consolidation of each matanitu depended on a number of factors. For those which had emerged prior to European contact, their main strategy for survival was the adoption of traditional methods of politicking. This included choice of marriage partners for powerful polygamous chiefs. Marriage enabled the extension of kinship network which further implied material support in terms of land and other resources for those who employed it. In times of warfare, the use of marriage alliances became crucial. Powerful chiefs also used the “vasu” network to solicit support. The dominance and special place of women in different communities was seen through the “vasu” system. This was variously emphasized in different “vanua” throughout the group. In eastern Fiji, especially in the chiefdoms of Bau and Lau, different levels of “vasu” are recognised. For instance, “vasu levu” is bestowed upon the children of a woman of chiefly rank. When these children visit their maternal uncles, they can take anything from their mother’s brothers. The philosophy of reciprocity behind this ancient practice is that males within a family are the protectors and providers for their sisters’ children.

It was through the recognition of the “vasu levu” system that Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna of the Roko Tui Bau family became the holder of the two highest titles in Lau, that of “Tui Nayau” and “Tui Lau”⁶⁴. Ratu Sukuna’s mother, Adi Litiana Maopa, was a daughter of the late Tui Nayau and Tui Lau, Ratu Tevita Uluilakeba. This made Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi’s six children, of which Ratu Sukuna was the eldest, “vasu levu”⁶⁵ to the chiefly seat of the Tui Nayau and Tui Lau. In recognition of his social status as a vasu levu and his modern

⁶³ See also Derrick, R.A. 1946: 161-162.

⁶⁴ While the Tui Nayau was a traditional Fijian chiefly title, that of Tui Lau was first created in 1871 for Ma’afu. Each title is bestowed by two different clans. The holder of the Tui Nayau is decided upon by the Nayau clan while that of the Tui Lau title is decided upon by the elders of the Tongan descendants in Sawana, Vanua Balavu.

⁶⁵ “Vasu” refers to the status of children through their maternal links. There are different categories of vasu in Fijian society and different regions of Fiji have their own ways of recognizing the vasu system.

educational achievements, the people of Lakeba and Lau as a whole installed Ratu Sukuna to these two highest titles in Lau. The recognition of inherited status with modern educational achievements contributed tremendously to the emergence of powerful chiefs and modern leaders in the Tovata Confederacy, especially those of Lau in the colonial and post-colonial periods.

This saw the emergence of chiefs like Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, his son, Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna and later Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. Lau's dominance in Fijian political leadership can be further traced to her early association with the Polynesian Kingdom of Tonga which had not only embraced European values through Christianity and education but had developed a hierarchical indigenous socio-political structure well before the period of European contact. Perhaps the main form of political knowledge that was gained from this association was the notion of order, rank and hierarchy and the acquisition of modern knowledge through education to re-affirm customary values.

In the various vanua in western Viti Levu, recognition of the vasu relationship was also observed and is still prominent during a death ceremony. The deceased's mother's relatives play a special role in the whole ritual, from being in charge of the place of mourning until the completion of the post-burial rites. The maternal relatives of the deceased can take anything from within the deceased's house or where the ceremony is being conducted and also receive the best and largest share of food and other artifacts.⁶⁶ The acknowledgement given to females in this context has to do with the recognition that women are the physical and biological producers of humanity and life in terms of the biological and social nurturing of the child as well as being the "extenders" of the boundaries of the kinship system. The vasu system in western Viti Levu is more egalitarian in the sense that it does not emphasize rank like the system in eastern and northeastern Fiji.

The chiefdom of Bau and the matanitu of Kubuna through Cakobau utilized socio-political relationships as well as modern ways of politicking to gain overall political power in eastern and northeastern Fiji. By 1850, Bau had emerged as the most powerful chiefdom in eastern and northeastern Fiji. This was consolidated by attempts by Cakobau to form modern government with the help of European settlers in Levuka between 1871 and 1875. The need to extend and consolidate political power through modern political leadership was accompanied by attempts to cede Fiji to Great Britain.

Between 1865 and 1871 there were several attempts to introduce some form of political stability in the Fiji group. They began on May 8, 1865 when Cakobau and Ma'afu were pressured into establishing a confederacy of the six most powerful eastern and northeastern matanitu in Fiji. These were Bau, Rewa, Lakeba, Bua, Cakaudrove and Macuata. They constituted a general assembly with power to legislate with a code of laws which was to be effective throughout the group. This system of government was similar to that of a republic consisting of six states which were allowed to maintain their sovereignty. Cakobau was the President of this first government. However, it collapsed after two years when Ma'afu started campaigning for his promotion to be the President. This was viewed suspiciously by leading Fijian chiefs.⁶⁷

After the collapse of the 1865 Government, Ma'afu with the help of R. S. Swanston, his secretary, had another attempt of forming a government known as "Na Tovata I Viti" or the Tovata Confederacy. Cakobau was at the same time urged by his European allies in Levuka to form a similar government in his dominion. Both these governments failed for lack of support as well as lack of revenue. Cakobau's government failed within a year. However, Ma'afu's government held on longer until 1871, the year in which Ma'afu first

⁶⁶ My personal observation of death rites in the vanua of Magodro in Ba province, in inland western Viti Levu.

⁶⁷ *Records of the Cakobau Government: the AD-Interim Government and the Provisional Government*. June, 1871 – September, 1875. National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 3. See also Derrick, R.A. 1946:161-164.

received the title of Tui Lau. This title was more a Tongan title than an indigenous Fijian one.⁶⁸

The consolidation of the matanitu of Tovata was a direct result of the adoption of traditional and modern administrative practices to enable it to survive. Attempts to form the matanitu of Tovata began in early 1867 by the chiefs of the matanitu of Bua, Cakaudrove, Lau, and Vanua Balavu of which Ma'afu was the chief political architect.⁶⁹ This involved the use of a modern constitution on which governance was based. Although the first attempts to establish the matanitu of Tovata failed, they finally succeeded in 1869. Its final consolidation involved the demarcation and extension of old boundaries after the Matanitu of Lau which previously included only Lakeba and neighbouring islands like Nayau, Moce, Oneata Namuka and Kabara. With the formation of the Tovata confederacy, islands in Southern Lau like Moala, Matuku, Totoya and Ono-I-Lau were also included. Vanua Balavu also became part of Lau, whereas previously it was part of Cakaudrove. In the north, Cakaudrove, Bua and also Macuata were included.

On November 3, 1871, as a result of ongoing pressure from European settlers in Levuka, another Cakobau Government was formed. Cakobau was also given the title of "Tui Viti" or "the King" by the Europeans of Levuka who were more the subjects of the King than indigenous Fijians themselves who did not recognize the authority of the King, either in the traditional or modern sense.⁷⁰ This was yet another attempt to unite Fiji under an indigenous leader without having to go through colonization. This government failed again for there was no consolidated customary political ground for Cakobau's leadership. This contributed directly to the weakness of his rule and the

⁶⁸ *Records of the Cakobau Government: AD-the Interim Government and the Provisional Government*, June 1871 – September, 1875: 3-4.

⁶⁹ See *Letter from Robert S. Swanston*, dated on 25th September, 1867 in Lomaloma to Her Britannic Majesty's Consul in Levuka, Ovalau. File F5/12 CS, National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji.

⁷⁰ The installation of a Fijian chief involves the traditional kingmakers on behalf of the members of a social group who give their recognition and support for the person and title. Additionally, the installation takes place within a geo-political boundary. In the case of the "King of Fiji", indigenous Fijians were not involved nor were there any recognition of a geo-political boundary within which the King exerted his authority.

growing dissatisfaction of his European subjects as well as Fijians who were wary of European encroachment on their land. The murder of the Burns family in Ba in 1873 gave an excuse for the Cakobau government to suppress and pacify various vanua in inland and western Viti Levu which did not recognize his rule. Additionally, the massacre led to the exile of members of the three vanua of Magodro, Qaliyalatina, and Naloto by the native constabulary.⁷¹ Derrick explains:

...They had been defeated by trained and better armed soldiers...Over a thousand of them-men, women and children, the vast majority of whom had not even a remote connection with the murder of the Burns family-were sentenced to penal servitude for periods ranging from three to seven years; and, in accordance with the profitable precedent established two years before at Lovoni, they were offered to the planters for hire to be paid to the government. Commodore Goodenough arrived at Levuka when the sale of these people was in progress. He deplored the whole proceedings as a form of slavery, warned British subjects to have nothing to do with them.⁷²

The unruly behaviour of the Cakobau government prior to cession prompted the British Consul to caution British subjects to be wary of associating themselves with it. As explained in the record of the Cakobau government (1871-1875):

On 17 March, 1874, the British Consul gave warning in a public notice that the Cakobau government was bankrupt and cautioned all British subjects against allowing the government further credit. The notice further declared that British subjects accepting or retaining official posts in the Armed Constabulary were liable to prosecution under the U.K. Foreign Enlistment Act. The Consul's action practically put an end to the attempt at self-government, and the newly formed Ministry strongly advised the King to reconsider the question of annexation.⁷³

From the perspective of the evolution of Fijian political history between 1800 and 1874, Fiji's final offer of cession to Great Britain marked the end of a very dynamic era of political rivalry and the failure of any one powerful chief to unite Fiji single handedly without European influence. A very real threat to

⁷¹ Cakobau's Native Constabulary consisted of indigenous Fijian soldiers and European volunteers. During the attack on the hill tribes of Ba, there were approximately a hundred trained Fijian troops, sixteen European volunteers and three hundred native auxiliaries. See also Derrick, R.A. 1946: 227.

⁷² Derrick, R.A. 1946: 228.

⁷³ *Records of the Cakobau Government: the AD-Interim Government and the Provisional Government*, June, 1871 – September, 1875. National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 11.

Cakobau's power at this time was that posed by Tonga through Ma'afu. King George's help in the Battle of Kaba reminded Cakobau that Tonga could step in again to help, and this time around through the annexation of Fiji.⁷⁴ The Tongan threat was real as explained in the records of the Cakobau government (1871-1875).

Cakobau began to find his supremacy threatened after 1855 by the rise to power of Ma'afu. The latter, a Tongan war chief, had come to Fiji with his retainers in 1848. After aiding Cakobau in a campaign against the chiefs of Rewa and their allies, Ma'afu had established himself in Lau...From there he began to extend his influence into other parts of the group until by 1865 he controlled the island of Beqa and large parts of the western coasts of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Cakobau watched his rival's activities with increasing alarm, seeing in them preparations for his own eventual subversion and overthrow. ...Cakobau turned for advice to the British Consul. William Thomas Pritchard, who responded by urging him to offer Fiji to Great Britain.⁷⁵

Cession and colonization facilitated Fiji's political control by a few chiefs in eastern and northeastern Fiji. The emerging power monopoly by these chiefly elites and expressions of dissent by other chiefs and commoners to counter this monopoly directly contradicted the theory of a whole-hearted cession by all the chiefs.⁷⁶

The Politics of the Deed of Cession and its aftermath

The complexity and diversity of Fijian society did not end at cession, even though only a few chiefs were involved in the Deed of Cession. Within Fijian society, the offer of cession by mostly eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs continues to be a point of contention amongst high chiefs from western Viti Levu who occasionally claim their political independence and their non-recognition of the Deed of Cession. Cakobau, from the perspective of western Fijian chiefs, was ceding a lot of vanua and matanitu that he had no traditional jurisdiction over. Subtle and at times outright dissent continued after cession to defy colonial and eastern Fijian rule, as will be explained in chapter three.

After cession, what pacified chiefs and Fijians in general was the power of the colonial state in its attempt to establish an institution of rule, the Matanitu I

⁷⁴See Derrick, R.A. 1946: 140. See also Campbell, I. C. 1990: 95.

⁷⁵ *Records of the Cakobau Government: the AD-Interim Government and the Provisional Government*, June 1871 – September, 1875. National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 3.

Taukei, for indigenous Fijians. Compliance to the new rule of law became inevitable through the adoption of the system of Indirect rule in the Matanitu iTaukei. Cession and the establishment of the Matanitu iTaukei strengthened and stabilized the evolving eastern Fijian orthodoxy which had emerged in the early 19th century with the eclipse of Verata and the emergence of Bau. However, the orthodoxy was multi-faceted and had many different socio-political realities. There were subtle rivalries within the eastern Fijian orthodoxy as seen in the competition amongst the chiefly household. These competitions were exacerbated by the newly found power through service in the Matanitu iTaukei. Meritocracy through colonial service and the modern education system provided an opportunity for rivalry and dissent to thrive. This is seen in the way political leadership passed from one chiefly household to another, one vanua to another, or one matanitu to another and how contesting families through the itokatoka, vanua, and matanitu continued to define and redefine such realities.

The politics surrounding the final offer of cession to Great Britain were many and varied. At the international level and from the perspective of imperialism and colonialism, annexation was an inevitable consequence of the extension of the market economy. The Fiji Islands were open to annexation by either Great Britain, France, Germany or the United States of America. While the path to Britain was already paved by William Cross and David Cargill in 1835, Germany had already established herself in the Pacific, including Fiji, in the form of trade. French interest was in the form of the establishment of the Catholic Church and the American \$45,000 claim for indemnity would have had political consequences without Cakobau's payment.

Chapter Summary

Traditional Fijian politics occur within the context of socio-political constructs from the itokatoka to the level of the matanitu. Internal political evolution of such constructs was also influenced by outside forces from the early 1800s

⁷⁶ Macnaught explains a Fijian myth that Fiji had not been ceded in anger, but in love ("loloma") to Queen Victoria. See Macnaught, T.J. 1982: 1.

when different waves of Europeans began arriving in large numbers. This saw the extension of kinship cycles from the itokatoka, mataqali and yavusa into political hierarchies such as the vanua and matanitu. However, in western Fiji, isolation in terms of socio-political development contributed to the egalitarian nature of the communities in terms of the vanua and matanitu found there.

The rise of the matanitu as a political construct involved both internal and external forces. In eastern Fiji, actions of foreign agents influenced the making of the matanitu in both their real and imagined boundaries. Herein lies ongoing and unresolved conflicts in modern Fijian polity. Questions often arise in terms of the real or imagined boundaries of the matanitu. If matanitu boundaries had been extended or reduced, it is logical to ask how and why these happened. The number of matanitu had been drastically reduced from thirty-two in 1835⁷⁷ to the current three in eastern Fiji. This indicates that the evolution of matanitu in eastern Fiji is a complex matter in the sense that the process of its formation after European contact may have been part of the social construction of cultural realities. Such realities were tailored and naturalized over time to suit contemporary needs.⁷⁸

Internal political rivalry since the 1800s was influenced by powerful external forces such as the role of the different waves of Europeans and neighbours like Tonga. These agents contributed to the social construction of the eastern and northeastern Fijian orthodoxy, dominated from the 1800s by Bau. Cakobau's ability to utilize both traditional and modern ways of politicking enabled him to dominate the political scene and to become the chief political architect of Fiji's cession to Great Britain. This strengthened his power in Fiji. However, these claims have not gone unchallenged. Historical events influenced Fijian political thinking and in the long term influenced socio-political events.

⁷⁷ See Derrick, R. A. 1946: 8-9.

⁷⁸ Thomas, N. 1997. *In Oceania: Visions, Artifacts, Histories*. Duke University Press, London: 186.

COLONISATION AND THE CREATION OF THE MATANITU ITAUKEI: STRENGTHENING OF AN ORTHODOXY (1874 – 1959)

CHAPTER THREE

Introduction

This chapter covers the second background period from colonization in 1874 to 1959, a year before the commencement of the period under study. The chapter begins with how the apparatus of the colonial state and the formation of the Matanitu iTaukei or Native (later Fijian) Administration re-created and deformed the flexibility of the pre-colonial political arrangements, thus influencing the nature of Fijian politics and party politics in particular. Amongst its major influences, the Matanitu iTaukei through its system of indirect rule reinforced the dominance of some chiefs from some vanua and matanitu over others. From cession until the 1950s it was mostly the eastern and north eastern Fijian chiefs who dominated Fijian politics.¹

It has been highlighted that the “collaborator chiefs”² who were employed in the Matanitu iTaukei or system of indirect rule utilized their new class status to promote and achieve personal gains. The colonial state and the collaborator chiefs in this context were aware of each other’s needs and adhered to each other’s demands for recognition and power.³ Through this collaborative system, Timothy Macnaught describes Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi of Bau as “Thurston’s enthusiastic tax collector”.⁴ This chapter argues that the formation of the Matanitu iTaukei by the colonial state had tremendous influence on Fijian society and politics. Work undertaken to realize this attempt at unity was massive. It involved both the physical demarcation of the

¹ See Robertson, R. T. “Making New Histories in Fiji: The Choice Between Materialist Political Economy and Neocolonial Orthodoxy” in *The Journal of Pacific Studies*, Vol. 12, 1986. The University of the South Pacific, Suva: 52. In this thesis, eastern and northeastern Fiji refer to eastern Viti Levu and the islands to the east as well as Vanua Levu, Taveuni and other small islands in the north and north east.

² Collaborator Chiefs was a general name applied to chiefs employed in the Matanitu iTaukei or system of indirect rule. Their role was regarded by a number of scholars as one of submissiveness and cooptation. In the process a “symbiotic” relationship occurred between the British colonial administrators and their chiefly collaborators.

³ Robertson, 1986: 52.

⁴ See Macnaught, T.J. 1982. *The Fijian Colonial Experience: A Study of the Neotraditional Order Under British Colonial Rule Prior to World War II*. Pacific Research Monograph No.7, The Australian National University: 49.

Fiji group into new boundaries as well as the social construction of certain aspects of customs and tradition in line with the needs of the colonial administration. The attempt to unify Fijians politically implied the re-creation of boundaries which demarcated “yasana” or provinces and “tikina” or districts. Additionally villages, including my own, were moved to more accessible sites. A system of indirect rule where mostly Fijian chiefs were employed, was established and Native regulations were formulated to redirect the lives of Fijians as a whole. In the process, the influence of those who were employed directly in the Matanitu iTaukei was conspicuous and profound.

The Matanitu iTaukei was influenced by internal rivalries and the sway of dominant orthodoxies within Fijian society, an ongoing trend since the early 1800s. The dominance of eastern and north-eastern Fijian chiefs in the Matanitu iTaukei, and through it, native membership of the Legislative Council since 1904, strengthened the traditional orthodoxy which supported them.⁵ In the process it simultaneously strengthened the power of collaborator chiefs as well as their vanua and matanitu and marginalized the “ways” of other vanua and matanitu. In its Fijian conceptualization “ways” include indigenous knowledge which is referred to in Fijian as “na vakasama, na itovo ni rai, vakabauta kei na ivakarau vakavanua”. They encompass processes of thought, perspectives, beliefs, and customs of a vanua as one. A latent effect of the marginalisation process was the incitement of dissent amongst chiefs and people from other regions in terms of vanua and matanitu.

There were various forms of dissent that were expressed and suppressed throughout the period of colonization. The suppression of the “Little War of Viti Levu” in inland western Viti Levu between 1875 and 1876 demonstrated the power of the colonial state as it attempted to unify Fijians politically. In the process, the power of collaborator chiefs, more so Cakobau and the Bauan chieftdom, was simultaneously extended. Further expressions of dissent were demonstrated through millenarian movements. Various individuals expressed their dissent towards the colonial administrators and their chiefly collaborators

⁵ From 1904 until 1963, native membership of the Legislative Council revolved around members of a few villages and provinces in eastern and northeastern Fiji. In the province of Tailevu, membership was centered on Bau, in Cakaudrove it was Somosomo, in Rewa it was Lomanikoro and in Lau, Tubou. See chapter three: 44-47.

through outright defiance or millenarian movements. The dissent started by Navosavakadua or Dugumoi of Ra in the 1880s was continued by Apolosi Nawai of Nadi in western Viti Levu in the early twentieth century.⁶ The form of dissent expressed by Nawai was a combination of outright defiance with millenarian undertones. Nawai's followers believed that he possessed extraordinary powers and was immortal.⁷

The suppression of dissent did not eradicate the show of defiance amongst indigenous Fijians. By the 1940s the impact of colonization and its rearrangement of Fijian society had been extensive. Amongst its outstanding influence was the strengthening of the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy with Bau emerging at the apex. The orthodoxy which emanated from the philosophy of Polynesian hierarchical empire building, was consolidated with the dominance of Bau and its allies in the Matanitu iTaukei. This thesis weaves in to this process the narrative of a few powerful chiefly families in eastern Fiji, whose grip on power immediately prior to colonization was strengthened through service in the Matanitu iTaukei. The narrative reveals a number of trends which arose out of socio-political relations during the period of colonisation. First was how some chiefly families took advantage of the interphase between traditional and modern politics and turned them into opportunities to control modern leadership. Second was the presence of competition and dissent to counter power control.

By 1956, eastern and northeastern chiefs such as Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna and their European allies, such as Sir Maurice Scott, legal adviser to the Fijian Affairs Board, were instrumental in the formation of the Fijian Association or "Soqosoqo iTaukei".⁸ The Association was formed in defence of a challenge

⁶ For Navosavakadua or Dugumoi see Kaplan, M. and Rosenthal, M. "Battlements, Temples and the Landscape of the Tuka: The Archaeological Record of a Cultural Transformation in Nineteenth Century Fiji". Vol.102 (2) 1993. *The Journal of Polynesian Society*, University of Auckland, New Zealand: 122. For Nawai see Scarr, D. (Ed). *Fiji: The Three Legged Stool. Selected Writings of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna*. Macmillan Education: 51-58.

⁷ Interview with the late Iliesa Naituku, Namena village, Tailevu. Naituku's father was a follower of Nawai and was one of those who did contract work for their subscription fee to the Viti Kabani.

⁸ See Alley, R. 1986. "The Emergence of Party Politics", in *Politics in Fiji*, Lal, B. V. (ed). The Institute for Polynesian Studies, Brigham Young University, Hawaii: 30-33.

by a European President of an Indian farmers union who criticized the status of Fijians, who at that time could not elect their own leaders. The Association reacted by declaring that Fijians would not be forced to change, and it also threatened to reclaim leases on native land.⁹ The Fijian Association later became the Fijian arm of the Alliance Party in 1966. While the Fijian Association was generally regarded by its initiators as an all inclusive Fijian party, it was viewed differently by Fijians in different regions, like those in western Viti Levu, who traditionally did not subscribe to the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy.¹⁰

From Global to Local: The Modern State and its Establishment in Fiji

The state as a modern unifying structure of rule was non-existent prior to colonization in Fiji. Its formation can be viewed from a number of perspectives. In classical and orthodox political thought the state is viewed as a neutral arbitrator of society's interests with a "civilizing" mission. Campbell explains that:

By the second half of the nineteenth century, Europeans at home and overseas, and those in the derivative states of America and Australasia, were intoxicated with racial supremacy and had devised crude philosophies to justify the political and material ascendancy to which they had risen.¹¹

In a similar vein Robertson explains that the establishment of the colonial state in Fiji is often justified by early Fiji historians through an orthodox perspective. He explains that:

⁹ See Alley, 1986: 30-33. See also Norton, R. 1990: 79.

¹⁰ In my interview with Apisai Tora, he explained that in western Viti Levu, vanua are the equal of matanitu. These social formations which he referred to as vanua-matanitu have chiefs who are independent of each other and considered as "first among equals". No chief has the power to impose his/her authority on another because of the egalitarian nature of western society. This is one of the major socio-political characteristics which distinguishes western Fiji from chiefdoms in the east and northeast. Interview with Senator Apisai Tora, 5 June, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province. For "the egalitarian nature of western Viti Levu" see also Durutalo, S. 1985. Internal Colonialism and Unequal Regional Development: The Case of Western Viti Levu, Fiji. M.A. Thesis. University of the South Pacific, Suva: 81. See also Alley, R. 1986: 32.

¹¹ Campbell, I.C. 1990. *A History of the Pacific Islands*, University of Queensland Press: 136.

Early histories, unashamedly biased towards the overwhelming superiority of western "culture", pictured a dark and gloomy Fiji of anarchic forces and unbridled barbarism, pathetic in its inability to rise even to the level of the noble savage in European eyes. The Fiji Times in 1880, for example, described Fiji as 'the foulest blot upon the fair face of creation; ...only in part dispelled as its peoples "learnt the acts of peace and realized the benefits of civilization."¹²

Such conceptualization of Fijian history explained the classical and orthodox civilizing view of state formation in Fiji. However, a number of local scholars view state formation in Fiji mainly from critical perspectives. Naidu acknowledges two major views of the state out of which one can derive a suitable definition for Fiji. The first view is that which is proposed by the structural functionalists and the comparative political systems school: that the state is a neutral entity standing above society with its sovereign authority. The second emanates from critical theories of the state, the founding proponent of which is Karl Marx. The various Neo-Marxian interpretations of the state generally propose that the formation and existence of the state in Third World societies are aimed at supporting and perpetuating dependent forms of socio-political and economic development.¹³

In a similar vein, Durutalo argues against the orthodox and dominant political view of colonialism and the establishment of the colonial state in Fiji as a partnership involving peaceful administration. He views colonialism generally as a system of economic exploitation through metropolitan surplus extraction, political oppression and patronage. This, he argues, was clearly demonstrated since the early years of colonization in Fiji with the suppression of popular uprisings in central Viti Levu in 1876 as well as the uprisings in Seaqaqa in 1882 and 1894. Further suppressions of millenarian movements such as that of Apolosi R. Nawai of Nadi in the early 1900s and the suppression of indentured labour strikes in 1920, 1943, 1960 and 1968, supports this argument.¹⁴

¹² Robertson, 1986: 33.

¹³ See Naidu, V. 1991. *Development, States and Class Theories: An Introductory Survey*. Fiji Institute of Applied Studies, Suva, Fiji. 18-36.

¹⁴ See Durutalo, S. 1986. *The Paramountcy of Fijian Interest and the Politicization of Ethnicity*. South Pacific Forum, Working Paper No. 6, University of the South Pacific Sociological Society, Suva, Fiji: 2.

Durutalo views the establishment and characteristic of the colonial state in Fiji as having two contradictory natures. Firstly, it has a role of a bureaucratic agent of imperialism and through coercion of the local population disrupted the self-sufficiency of the indigenous pre-capitalist society, bringing the society to a subservient relation under metropolitan capital. The bureaucratic nature of the colonial state was reflected in the nature of the formation of the colonial state itself and the complex nature of the formation of the "Matanitu iTaukei"¹⁵ as discussed in detail in this chapter. Secondly, Durutalo views the colonial state as a weak paternalistic mediator which struggled to maintain a precarious sovereignty over many conflicting interests within Fiji's colonial society.¹⁶ The complex nature of Fiji's indigenous society, with competing legitimacies and interests, continuously challenged the modern state since its establishment in 1874.

Along the same line of reasoning, Howard explains that in order to understand the evolution of modern Fijian politics, there is a need to focus on Fiji's history in terms of the different interpretations of the past. He argues that there are two interwoven layers of Fijian history, one consisting of an "objective" past and one that offers an "idealized" past. Fiji's objective history reveals a pre-colonial past which was composed of different regional traditions within warring chiefdoms and confederacies. There was also growing power rivalry amongst chiefs. An ideal version of pre-colonial history emerged during the period of colonization. It idealized Fijian society as having a homogenous and uniform model based on some eastern chiefdoms. Howard further argues that the paradisaical and mythical view of history suited the interests of the colonizers and eastern chiefly rulers.¹⁷ This idealized version of Fijian history was socially constructed after the establishment of the colonial state. It interpreted and transformed Fiji's objective past into a neo-traditional and idealized history.¹⁸ This interpretation of a neo-traditional order was needed by the colonial state to enable the rule of mostly eastern chiefly

¹⁵ In this thesis Matanitu iTaukei refers to the Native (later Fijian) Administration or the system of indirect rule which was introduced by the colonial state in Fiji. The three terms will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis.

¹⁶ See Durutalo, S. 1986: 15.

¹⁷ See Howard, M. C. 1991. *Fiji: Race and Politics in an Island State*. University of British Columbia, Canada: 14.

¹⁸ For an indepth discussion of the neo-traditional order in colonial Fiji, see also Macnaught, 1982:1-128.

elites in the system of indirect rule.¹⁹ One can further argue here that the model was needed as a founding political ideology through which the establishment of the colonial state and its ensuing Matanitu iTaukei as discussed in this thesis, was justified.

A similar line of reasoning is expressed by Sutherland, who argues that the establishment of the Native Administration or the "Matanitu iTaukei", must not be seen as a separate form of administration. It was an integral part of the colonial state, although the role of indigenous Fijians and their contribution towards the state differed from those of other ethnic groups. He explains that:

Fijians were not marginalized from the economic mainstream, but were very much part of it. Where they differed from other races was in the nature of their integration. In most instances and at different historical stages, their predominant forms of economic involvement were different from other races. The forms of exploitation of Fijian labour, therefore, were often different from those of Indian labour. Behind the myth of Fijian protection and economic marginality, then, lies a reality of colonial exploitation.²⁰

Confirming this line of argument, Gordon explained that the formation of the colonial state in Fiji was aimed first and foremost at establishing a successful system of political control and domination which was directed at minimizing the adoption of naked force for social control.²¹ The vast network of indirect rule within the Matanitu iTaukei facilitated socio-political control of the indigenous population. Infused with the traditional practice of reciprocity which guided the two-way relationship between customary leaders and people were the new roles and relationships which evolved through the establishment of the Matanitu iTaukei. The new roles introduced a "one direction" allegiance where Fijians were required to fulfill the requirements of the colonial state, such as the procurement of produce tax through the Matanitu iTaukei. These new roles distorted old reciprocal and redistributive forms of relations as the

¹⁹ See Howard, M. C. 1991: 14.

²⁰ Sutherland, W. 1992. *Beyond the Politics of Race: An Alternative History of Fiji to 1992*. Australian National University, Canberra: 26. See also Robertson, 1986: 53. Extending Sutherland's line of argument, Rodman explains that the notion of preserving traditional societies through the creation of separate administration, was a direct means of accessing a cheap labour force by European entrepreneurs and colonial governments. See Rodman, M. 1984. "Masters of Tradition: Customary Land Tenure and New Forms of Inequality in a Vanuatu Peasantry" in the *American Ethnologist* 11: 64.

²¹ See Gordon, A. (as Lord Stanmore), 1897. *Fiji: Records of Private and Public Life (1875-1880)*, Vol. 1. privately printed, Edinburgh: 163.

colonial state imposed its new demands on indigenous Fijians. Additionally, they imposed more burden on the indigenous population.

A State Within a State: The Creation of the Matanitu iTaukei

The establishment of the colonial state in Fiji involved the blending of modern notions and the rationale for state formations and an idealized customary notion of Matanitu formation. This idealization was based on the belief, naïve or deliberate, of the existence of a homogenous Fijian culture. The notion behind the formation of the Matanitu iTaukei remotely resembled the idea which underlies the formation of a traditional Matanitu in pre-colonial eastern and north-eastern Fiji. While the colonial state and its ensuing Matanitu iTaukei evolved as an “all encompassing” system of administration, the evolution of the traditional Fijian matanitu differed in significant ways. Firstly, it existed in certain areas of Fiji only. Derrick explains that:

This was a recent development, during the wars of historical times; among the people of the interior and those in western Viti Levu the large confederations were unknown.²²

By 1835 Fijians recognised the existence of at least thirty-two matanitu in Fiji. However, the nature and power of Matanitu differed.²³ Continued rivalry resulted in the demise of some and the strengthening of others. In parts of eastern and northeastern Fiji where the concept of the Matanitu evolved, a few chiefs attempted to extend its jurisdiction through wars, however, none succeeded in uniting the whole of Fiji under a single matanitu. Colonization and the formation of the modern state re-conceptualized the idea behind the traditional matanitu in the form of an overall Matanitu iTaukei which was empowered and strengthened by legal rational authority. However, to allow the existence of traditional vanua and matanitu systems in their former independent and diverse status would have been disruptive for the existence of the colonial state. France explains that:

²² Derrick, R. A. 1946. *A History of Fiji*. Government Printer Press, Colony of Fiji: 9.

²³ Ibid., 1946: 9.

It was necessary to introduce uniformity into the system of administration, and the indigenous institutions of government, such as they were, would have been too varied and despotic to have been incorporated into a colonial administration. The Fijian administration soon established itself as the new mode of social control which supplemented and in some respects, incorporated, that of the chiefs.²⁴

The formation of the Matanitu iTaukei as a centralized Fijian administrative system was described by Spate as the organizational expression of the communal system in the form of a "state within a state".²⁵ Firstly, for the first time it introduced the idea of centralized rule or government where all Fijians were subjected to a single bureaucratic form of leadership from the governor to villagers. Secondly, the impact of this new type of rule was subtle yet powerful in its re-arrangement of traditional Fijian society, making way for a neo-traditional order.²⁶ The process inevitably strengthened the power of chiefs in some vanua and matanitu in eastern and north-eastern Fiji, especially of those who were employed in the Matanitu iTaukei. Consequently, the power of traditional vanua like Bau and matanitu like Kubuna and Tovata, where the majority of chiefs in the system of indirect rule were recruited, were strengthened. For almost a century of colonization such development gave rise to the emergence of a new breed of chiefs who owed their influence and authority more to the modern sanctions of the Matanitu iTaukei than to traditional legitimacy.²⁷ The diagram below illustrates the relationship between the colonial state and Matanitu iTaukei.

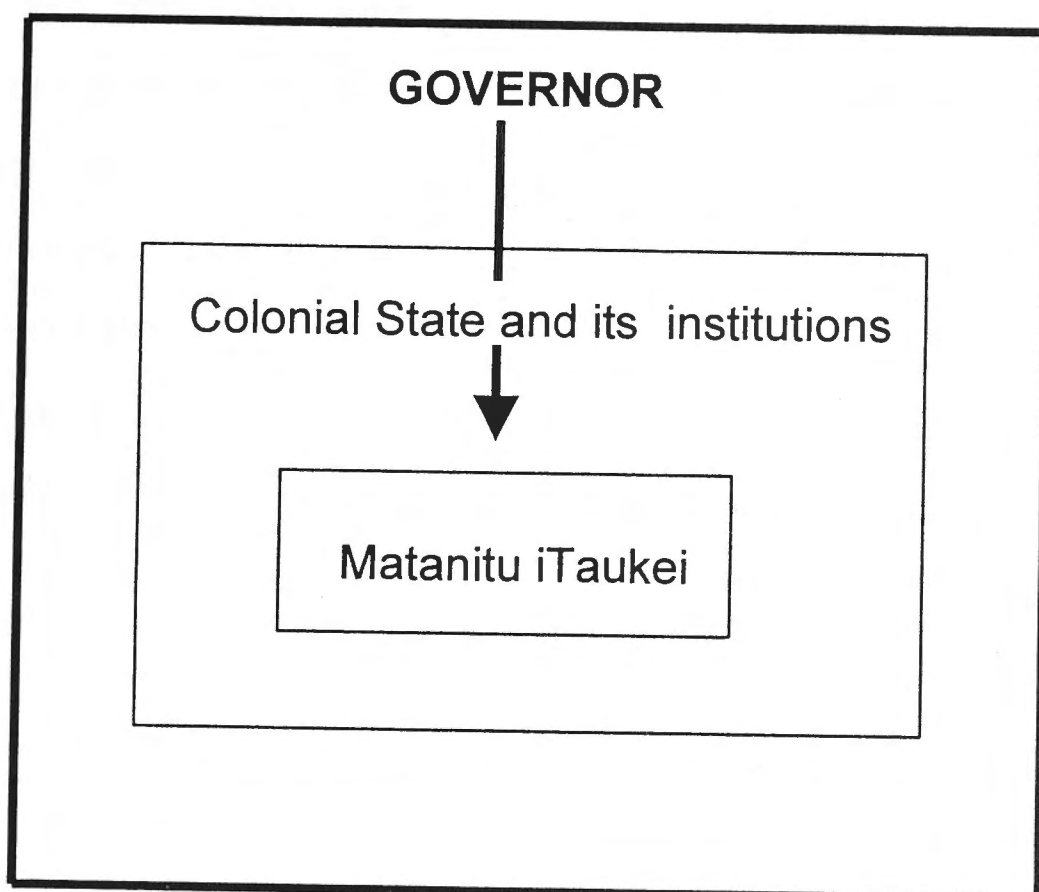
²⁴ France, P. 1969. *The Charter of the Land: Custom and Colonization in Fiji*. Oxford University Press, London: 26.

²⁵ Spate, O.H.K. 1959. *The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects*, Suva, Fiji: 31

²⁶ For an understanding of the neo-traditional order in the Matanitu iTaukei, see also Macnaught, 1982: 38-64.

²⁷ See also Macnaught, 1982: 49-63. See also Howard, M.C. and Durutalo, S. 1987. *The Political Economy of the South Pacific to 1945*. Monograph Series No. 26, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville, Australia: 147.

Figure 8: A State Within a State: The Matanitu iTaukei



As illustrated in the diagram, the Matanitu iTaukei became the core and foundation of colonial state formation in Fiji. Within local society it recreated a new traditional order in the process of its evolution. The manifest objectives of state formation in Fiji may have been the same for other colonies in the British Empire: that is, to create institutions, which apart from “preserving” traditional societies, also facilitated the formation and consolidation of colonial capitalism amongst other reasons.²⁸ Such strategies of state formations create their own internal dynamics, causing fundamental changes which were never anticipated in local societies. In Fiji’s context, the formation and empowerment of the Matanitu iTaukei through the creation of Native Affairs Ordinances enabled the imposition of the rule of law from the top echelons of power to grass root Fijians in the villages. Meanwhile customs and traditions were still practised as long as they did not conflict with the new Native regulations or “lawa ni Matanitu iTaukei”.

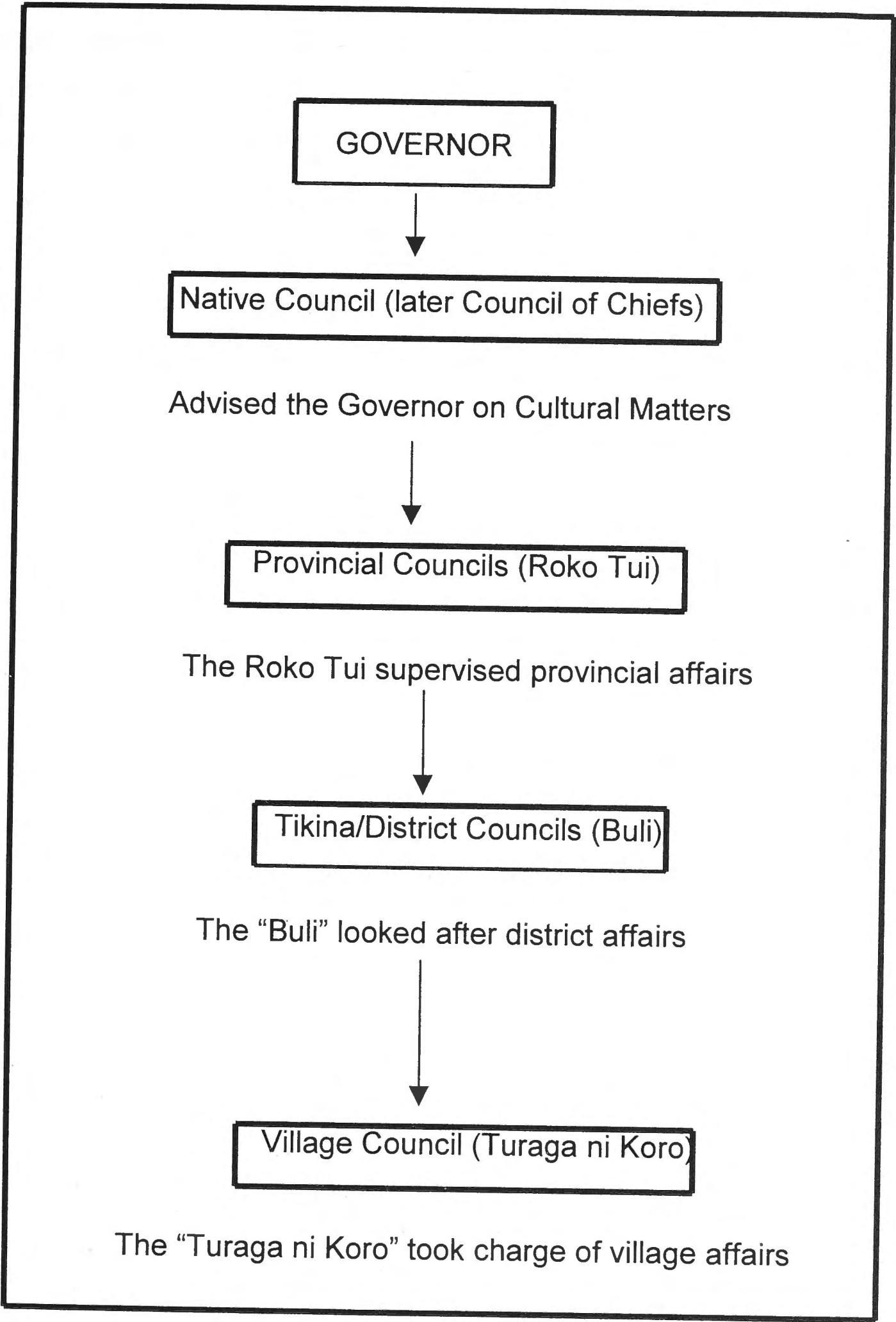
Initially, laws regulating native affairs were created to govern indigenous Fijians under the Matanitu iTaukei. The Native Regulation Board (NRB) was created by the first governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, through the Native Affairs Ordinance. Membership of the Native Regulations Board comprised the

²⁸ See Rodman, M. 1984. *Masters of Tradition: Customary Land Tenure and New Forms of Social Inequality in a Vanu’atu Peasantry*. *American Ethnologist* 11: 64.

Governor, at least two European members of the Legislative Council and not less than six members who were appointed by the governor. The first regulation created by the NRB had provisions for the appointment of native officials and stated their responsibilities in the management of native affairs within provinces.²⁹ The Matanitu iTaukei as an institution of rule served as an umbrella body through which, for the first time, all indigenous Fijians were governed under the “lawa ni Matanitu iTaukei” or native regulations. The diagram below shows the structure of the Matanitu iTaukei in 1875.

²⁹ See Roth, G.K. 1951. *Native Administration in Fiji During the Past 75 Years: A Successful Experiment in Indirect Rule*. The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, London: 2.

Figure 9: The Structure of the Matanitu iTaukei/Native Administration (1875)



At the apex of the Matanitu iTaukei, or Native Administration, was the Native Council (later Council of Chiefs). It was responsible to the governor and served in an advisory capacity. The Native Council met once yearly with the governor. The Roko Tui of each province and lesser officials employed in the Matanitu iTaukei assembled in the Bose Vakaturaga or Chiefly Council meeting to discuss what the council considered as crucial issues. The Roko

Tui was in charge of provincial affairs. Below him was the Buli who was responsible to the Roko Tui for implementing the resolutions of different councils as well as native regulations. Generally, the Buli was in charge of village affairs within a district or tikina. Since tikina boundaries initially closely corresponded with vanua boundaries, the appointed Buli was usually an installed vanua chief. The "Turaga ni Koro", or village headman, was the Matanitu iTaukei representative at the village level. He was in charge of the enactment of village regulations such as maintaining the cleanliness of the village and other duties. At the tikina level was the "Turaga ni Lewa iTaukei", or Native Stipendiary Magistrate, who presided at the district or tikina court. He worked with a European magistrate at the provincial court. At both the provincial and district courts a strict code of Native regulations was enforced. Non-cooperation with chiefs in communal work was considered disobedience and an offence.³⁰ Another employee of the Native Administration was the "provincial scribe" or the "ovisa ni yasana". He was the tax collector within a province and was responsible for collecting provincial levies.

Of Demarcations and Social Constructions: New Traditions of the Matanitu iTaukei

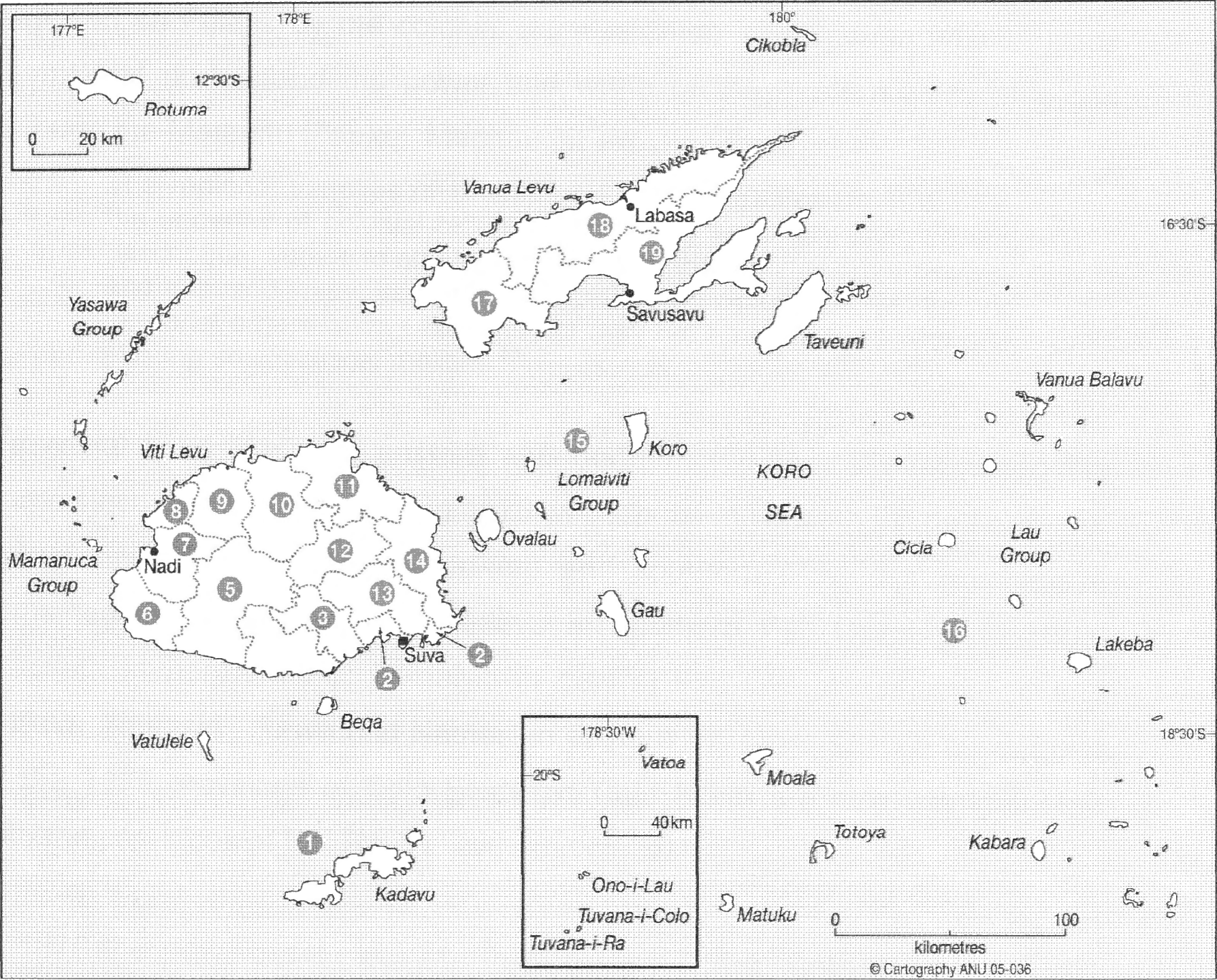
The establishment of the Matanitu iTaukei or Native (later Fijian) Administration in 1875 began with the demarcation of provincial boundaries. Provinces were carved out of traditional vanua boundaries. Within each of the initial nineteen provinces were a number of vanua. **(See map on 1875 provincial boundaries)**

New regulations were created and enforced through the Matanitu iTaukei to regulate sociopolitical and economic relations within the new administrative boundaries. They included regulations which restricted the movement of individuals outside of the village boundaries. The demarcation process rigidified the pre-colonial flexibility of the traditional vanua boundaries. Kinship groups which found themselves in newly drawn boundaries were limited in the flexibility of movements and social networking.³¹

³⁰ See Macnaught, 1982: 4-5.

³¹ Members of my own yavusa of Nawainovo live in two vanua and tikina or districts in the province of Tailevu. The demarcation of provincial and district boundaries limited their

1875 PROVINCIAL BOUNDARIES



1 KADAVU	5 COLO WEST	9 BA	13 NAITASIRI	17 BUA
2 REWA	6 NADROGA	10 COLO NORTH	14 TAILEVU	18 MACUATA
3 NAMOSI	7 NADI	11 RA	15 LOMAIVITI	19 CAKAUDROVE
4 SERUA	8 LAUTOKA	12 COLO EAST	16 LAU	

To keep people within defined boundaries, there was a tax known as "soli ni yasa"³² which was levied on people who left their villages without valid reasons. Such regulations were created to confine people within newly demarcated boundaries. This was one of the major forms of social control imposed on Fijians by the colonial administration and through which Fijians learnt and understood the power and wrath of the modern state enforced through the Matanitu iTaukei. Macnaught explains that:

The regional varieties of kinship and social organization in old Fiji, the underlay of colonial reconstruction, defy summary analysis and description: suffice to emphasize here that the colonial order devised and imposed new, very much simplified principles of authority and territorial organization which may or may not have meshed with pre-existing sociopolitical realities.³³

Provincial boundaries for eastern and northern Fiji basically remained the same since they were created in 1875 while those in western Fiji had been redrawn since 1945. Eastern, northern and southern provinces which have remained the same include: Kadavu in southern Fiji; Cakaudrove, Bua, Macuata in northern Fiji; Lomaiviti in central Fiji; Lau in eastern Fiji; and Tailevu, Naitasiri, Rewa and Namosi in eastern Viti Levu. On Viti Levu, parts of the 1875 provinces of Colo East and Colo North are now amalgamated with the provinces of Ba, Ra, Tailevu, and Naitasiri.

In 1875 the provinces in western Fiji included Serua, Colo West, Nadroga, Colo North, Ba, Nadi, and Lautoka. Most of these were re-demarcated and renamed after 1945 to include Serua, Nadroga and Navosa (formerly part of Colo West), Ba and Ra. The provinces of Nadi, Lautoka, parts of Colo West and parts of Colo North were amalgamated and formed the province of Ba, which is now the largest province in Fiji in terms of population and second largest in terms of land mass. Part of the province of Colo West became Navosa and was joined with the province of Nadroga to form the province of Nadroga and Navosa since 1945.

flexibility of movements and hence restricted social relations as regulations regarding movement enforced by the Matanitu iTaukei were observed.

³² The term "yasa" in Fijian refers to a rover or a person who wanders around from place to place.

³³ Macnaught, 1982: 3.

The demarcation of provinces in central and western Viti Levu to form what were formerly Colo North, Colo East, Colo West (its highland components), and Serua, Nadroga, Nadi, Lautoka, Ba and Ra (its coastal component) in 1875 had more to do with colonial administrative convenience of trying to separate the “obedient” from the “disobedient”. The highland components of western Viti Levu had always been the center of dissent towards Bau’s attempt to extend her power concurrent with European planters’ ambition to grab land and also through the enforcement of Christianity since 1835 and finally colonization in 1874.³⁴ The re-demarcation of former “restless” western provinces in 1945, perhaps, was a direct impact of the pacification process under the Matanitu iTaukei.

Within the demarcated provincial and tikina boundaries regulations which were created and enacted by the Colonial administration through the Matanitu iTaukei facilitated the social construction of Fijian customs and traditions to enable unification and homogeneity within Fijian society. Scarr argues such regulations were aimed at creating “one habit of mind and conduct” for all indigenous Fijians.³⁵

Politics of the Matanitu iTaukei: Social Construction of a Neotraditional Order

The first Native Council meeting which was held at Draiba in Ovalau expressed the agenda of the colonial state towards this course. The first issue discussed at the meeting was the need to focus on “important” elements of Fijian customs and traditions to retain under the colonial state. These were mostly customs which were not only going to introduce a form of conformity and homogeneity but more important were those which were not going to contradict and negate the existence of the colonial state.³⁶

³⁴ See also Routledge, D. 1985. *Matanitu: The Struggle for Power in Early Fiji*. Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji: 173-178.

³⁵ Scarr, D. 1984. *Fiji: A Short History*. George Allen & Unwin, Sydney: 90.

³⁶ See *Notes of the Proceedings of a Native Council Held at Draiba on the Island of Ovalau in the Month of September 1875*. Ref. No. DU 600. F5 f52. 1875/81. National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 1.

The first issue under discussion was that regarding "Lala".³⁷

What is true "Lala" and who are the chiefs who have the right to its exercises and privileges? After some discussion each Chief was called upon to give an account of the "Lala" custom of their several Provinces at the present time.³⁸

When the issue of "lala" was discussed by representatives from different provinces, it became evident that the practice of this ancient custom differed throughout the group. Roko Tui Bua³⁹ explained that "lala" in Bua was part of chiefly authority regarding a form of traditional taxation founded on reciprocity. He further argued that doing away with "lala" was tantamount to eradicating the foundation of the chiefly system. People in Bua needed the imposition of such practices such as "lala" not only to enable the sustenance of chiefly retainers but also, more important, to make people work.⁴⁰

Roko Tui Cakaudrove, on the other hand, argued that while the practice of "lala" in Cakaudrove and in Vanua Levu as a whole was similar to that of Bua, it should not be however, forcefully imposed on the people. It is crucial to note here that Roko Tui Cakaudrove, in discussing the abuse of "lala", was referring to the use of "lala" to support chiefly officials in the Matanitu iTaukei. Roko Tui Cakaudrove's argument exposes the use of ancient customary practices to suit the private interests of chiefs in the system of indirect rule. This in the long term was imposed to enable the survival of the colonial state.

The new version and usage of lala by chiefs employed in the Matanitu iTaukei through the building of houses or planting of gardens, as regulated by the

³⁷ Lala was traditional obligation levied by high chiefs, such as Vanua chiefs, on their people. It involved the rendering of services either in goods or in services such as house-building, garden-planting, feeding people or road-making. It was a cornerstone for reciprocity which enabled the survival of the chiefly system through the collection and re-distribution of resources. See also Thomson, B. 1908. *The Fijians: A Study of the Decay of Custom*. William Heinemann, London: 66-78.

³⁸ *Notes Of the Proceedings of a Native Council Held at Draiba on the Island of Ovalau in the Month of September, 1875*. National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 1.

³⁹ Roko Tui was the highest provincial official in the provincial administration. These positions were mainly reserved for chiefs. "Roko Tui" was a traditional chiefly title denoting some vanua chiefs in the province of Tailevu. For example, "Roko Tui Bau" was the highest ranking chief in the chiefdom of Bau prior to the rise of the "Vunivalu", Warlord or Warrior chief of Bau. Other vanua which use the title are Kiuva as in "Roko Tui Kiuva" and Viwa as in "Roko Tui Viwa." See also Seruvakula, S. B. 2000. *Bula Vakavanua*. Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva: 159-160.

⁴⁰ *Notes Of the Proceedings of a Native Council Held at Draiba on the Island of Ovalau in the Month of September, 1875*. National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 1.

colonial administration, demonstrated the social construction of customs and traditions to suit the needs of the colonial state. The usage of lala was confined by regulation for use by the Roko Tui and Buli, officials of the Matanitu iTaukei. Not all chiefs who were traditionally entitled to lala continued to receive services without the sanction of the Legislative Council.⁴¹ Some like the Tui Nadi, Ratu Navula, was overruled by the acting Roko of Ba and the Buli of Nadi in 1887 when he attempted to exert lala on his people for the procurement of rafters for his house as well as "yaqona" or kava for the builders. The acting Roko and Buli, exerting their newly attained authority through the Matanitu iTaukei regulations, overruled the practice of an ancient custom by a chief who was traditionally entitled to it. Discussions about the incident which transpired amongst the members of the Native Council in 1887 highlight a number of things. First, that the Matanitu iTaukei roles had elevated the status of ordinary people, enabling them to overrule traditional leaders. Although lower-ranking, the acting Roko and Buli were empowered by their new roles. Changing circumstances regarding the introduction of the new regulation is best summarized by the Roko Tui of Ra, whose words of caution were:

Navula, you must remember that times have changed. Nemani has been appointed to rule over you.⁴²

The Roko Tui Nadroga, however, highlighted another crucial point which transpired from the discussions. He explained how the authority of some high chiefs was neutralized by new regulations which were enforced by collaborator chiefs. Roko Tui Nadroga argued:

The reason for Navula's discontent is that, in former days, he was a chief of considerable rank, and anything he ordered was carried out. Now, however, he can do nothing as he holds no appointment, and he feels the change. Navula is a chief greatly respected at Nadi. When he gives an order it is carried out, but his people are much annoyed as his orders are being countermanded by Nemani and Sailosi the Buli.⁴³

The new regulation favoured collaborator chiefs regardless of their social rank because it allowed the Roko Tui and Buli to exert lala under their new official

⁴¹ France, P. 1969: 109.

⁴² *Notes on Proceedings of a Native Council, Held at Rukurukulevu, Province of Nadroga, in the month of May, 1887.* Government Printer, Suva: 15.

⁴³ *Ibid*, May, 1887: 15.

status. This case highlights how the Matanitu iTaukei distorted an ancient customary practice for its own convenience.

Macnaught discusses another extreme situation in the usage of the traditional philosophy of lala in Gordon's produce tax system in 1875. He explains that

Thurston, first auditor general of the colonial government, designed for Gordon a taxation scheme that made unaccustomed demands on the villages by requiring all able-bodied men to cultivate marketable crop in a communal tax field under the direction of the chiefs. The scheme was defended as a development of the traditional lala rights of chiefs to command garden planting to meet their own needs and ensure the prosperity of the people. The produce of each district had to realize a cash figure as part of the sum allocated to the province by the Legislative Council.⁴⁴

The burden of Thurston's produce tax was summed up by Maika, the Native Stipendiary Magistrate of Cakaudrove during the 1884, Native Council Meeting in Naiserelagi, Ra. He argued:

It is true that copra is easy to make: we wait till the nuts drop from the trees, then we sun the copra made from them: when it rains it is taken inside and when fine taken out again. Some people have to pay ten bags and some fourteen, which is too heavy and impossible to be done, and some of us therefore neglect our gardens. We do not know at what amount we are assessed. Some of the people have died and we have to make their taxes all the same.⁴⁵

The customary lala right became contested ground between two powerful groups in the early years of colonization. On one hand were the chiefs who were traditionally entitled to it, and who lost the privilege of its usage due to native regulations. On the other, was the colonial state which conveniently transformed and usurped the usage of lala right for its own benefit.

On the whole the first series of meetings in the Native Council between 1875 and the early 1900s were fundamental in establishing and consolidating the power of the colonial state. In the process the rights and interests of collaborator chiefs were secured in return for their loyalty in ensuring the conformity of the Fijian population at large. The symbiotic relationship

⁴⁴ Macnaught, 1982: 7.

⁴⁵ *Notes of the Proceedings of a Native Council, Held at Naiserelagi, Ra, in the month of May, 1884.* Government Printer, Suva: 13.

between the colonial administration and collaborator chiefs strengthened the system of indirect rule.

Support rendered to the colonial government by collaborator chiefs was clearly exemplified in the words of the Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, during the 1880 Council of Chiefs meeting in Mualevu village in Lau. Gordon himself was involved in the social construction of customs and traditions when he referred to the Vunivalu of Bau as "Tui Viti", a title which was created by European settlers in Levuka. Since the title was never earned traditionally, it therefore was never recognized by indigenous Fijians.⁴⁶ In his address to the members of the Native Council, Gordon stated:

For the first time since these Councils were commenced the Vunivalu Tui Viti is absent from us. His health is bad...I regret his absence, for his influence has always been felt on the side of what is just and true in these meetings...I should also say to you how good and true a helper he has ever been to me. His advice has been sound advice. His help has been willing help. He has strengthened me in many ways in the work of the land.⁴⁷

To gauge the allegiance of chiefs, especially those in the Native Council and through them the Fijian people, Gordon promised the chiefs the long-term security of their land. The law regarding the non-alienation of native land was based on regulations which were passed by the Native Council in January, 1880. The Governor reiterated:

Another law has been made to secure Native lands from further alienation. This is one of the most important laws that has ever been passed here. It has been translated into Fijian, that you may know all its contents. It has been based on the Regulations you passed in January. I trust it will secure the object it is intended for; which is to prevent any more land belonging to Fijians from being sold by them or taken away from them. The registration of Native lands under it will commence immediately.⁴⁸

To keep the allegiance of collaborator chiefs, by the 1880s the Roko Tui were receiving a twentieth share of all lease money in their respective provinces.

⁴⁶ See Scarr, 1984: 66 on the circumstances surrounding the promotion of Cakobau as "Tui Viti" by Ma'afu, the Tongan and their European audience in Levuka in 1871. See also Derrick, 1946: 105 on how Cakobau "arrogated to himself" the title of "Tui Viti" or King of Fiji.

⁴⁷ See *Notes of the Proceedings of a Native Council, Held at Mualevu, on the Island of Vanuabalavu, Lau, in the month of November, December, 1880, and January, 1881*. Reference no. DU600.5 F5 (1875-1881). National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 2.

⁴⁸ See *Notes of the Proceedings of a Native Council, Held at Mualevu, on the island of Vanuabalavu, Lau, in the months of November, December, 1880, and January, 1881*. Reference No. DU600.5 F5 (1875 – 1881). National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 2.

Roko Tui in the sugarcane growing areas received more money, ranging from two hundred to three hundred pounds per year.⁴⁹

Social construction of the Matanitu iTaukei also involved the investigation of various customary practices and then the formulation of detailed laws after discussions in the Council. However, in most cases the laws which were arrived at were not reflective of the many variations of customs throughout Fiji. This was seen in the way mataqali as a social unit was enforced by the Native Lands Commission as the land-owning unit for all Fijians even though there were variations everywhere. France explains that Thomson's⁵⁰ findings in three different areas on Viti Levu, the Rewa valley, the plains of Ba, and Bau in Tailevu indicated such marked variations that "they might well describe three different countries and three different races". Even though the itokatoka (or extended family) land holding was common in most parts of Fiji including Bau, the Native Lands Commission, nevertheless, in the end adopted the mataqali as a land-holding unit.⁵¹ Nayacakalou also discusses the diversity and complexity of the Fijian sociopolitical structure and the fact that prior to the commencement of the Native Lands Commission in 1880, not all groups fitted neatly into structures such as the itokatoka, mataqali and yavusa as envisaged by Maxwell.⁵² His research in Tavuki village, Kadavu and Draubuta in Tailevu confirmed this.⁵³

An overall land-holding characteristic which was introduced by colonization was the notion of the non-inalienability of land. Various ancient customs

⁴⁹ See Macnaught, 1982: 5.

⁵⁰ Basil Thomson was the Native Lands Commissioner whose name was announced in the Fiji Royal Gazette of 2 June, 1890. Thomson with his commissioners (the second group appointed since 1880) continued the work left behind by Wilkinson and his group. They were to investigate matters pertaining to usage and ownership of native lands under the native lands ordinance of 1880. See also France, P. 1969: 32.

⁵¹ See also France, P. 1969: 136-137.

⁵² G.V. Maxwell was appointed by Governor Sir Henry May in July 1912 to resume the work of former Native Land Commissioners who had left the work unfinished. Six months after his appointment he had drawn a Fijian social structure from which he based his land ownership unit which was adopted by Fijian society ever since. See also France, P. 1969: 165-175.

⁵³ See Nayacakalou, R.R. 1975. *Leadership in Fiji*. University of the South Pacific in association with Oxford University Press, Melbourne: 14-30.

governed the transmission of land amongst different kinship groups. Thomson explained that:

In one respect the cession of the colony has affected land tenure in a marked degree. It has put an end to the continued transfer of land that flourished under the ancient custom. With the abolition of heathen customs and the cessation of native wars all reasons for permanent transfer have been swept away.⁵⁴

The social construction of customs and traditions also influenced social relations within Fijian society. A number of chiefs seized such opportunities to elevate their social status and consolidate their power through it, more so those who were employed in the Matanitu iTaukei.

Social Transformations and Dissent Through the Matanitu iTaukei

A crucial political development which emanated from discussions in Native Council meetings was the role of collaborator chiefs in reporting “non-compliance” to the Governor, who was now regarded as an “overall chief”. The use of sanctions, or more specifically force, through the colonial state enabled the governor to assert the new role and deal with reported problems. This was necessary in a heterogeneous society like Fiji, where there was no overall leader prior to the establishment of the colonial state. It even became more necessary in provinces like Kadavu where the traditional political philosophy of “Manu Duitagi” was practised.⁵⁵ The command of the Roko Tui who was a chief in a certain vanua, was often not obeyed by chiefs of other vanua on the island. In the 1876 Native Council meeting, Roko Tui Kadavu, who was from the vanua of Tavuki, reported:

One of our Bulis, Buli Naceva, cannot perform his duties; he does not generally assemble his people at meetings, and when we have our provincial meetings he habitually absents himself. I have been twice to his district without seeing him, and he does not generally visit me. The work of his district is consequently neglected; I think Kaliova Bainivalu should be appointed to supersede him.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ France, 1969: 135.

⁵⁵ “Manu Duitagi” advocated an egalitarian sociopolitical philosophy in the context of a vanua. Each vanua chief was considered supreme in his or her own vanua. In the context of Manu Duitagi all the chiefs of the seven vanua in Kadavu are considered as “first amongst equals”. This is a similar egalitarian sociopolitical philosophy to that which is found in vanua in western Viti Levu.

⁵⁶ See *Notes on the Proceedings of a Native Council, Held at Waikava on the Island of Vanua Levu in the Month of November, 1876*. Reference No. Du 600.5 F52 1875/81. National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 4.

Non-compliance of the Matanitu iTaukei regulations was not unusual amongst a number of chiefs. Some simply ignored regulations to spite and annoy collaborator chiefs, who had found a new source of authority over chiefs and people they did not traditionally command.⁵⁷ Such situations highlighted permanent challenges which both the colonial administration and the collaborator chiefs encountered throughout the ninety-six years of colonial rule in Fiji.

Reports of non-compliance by collaborator chiefs contributed in the long term to both their promotion and the strengthening of their traditional authority. Scarr discusses Nayacakalou's view that although the new role of Buli was basically unattractive in terms of changing from an accepted traditional leader into a "bureaucratic cog" with unattractive remuneration, it was nevertheless still sought after as a means of affirming chieftainship.⁵⁸ In the same context continuous control of some positions such as "Roko Tui" by chiefs of some vanua within a province had a direct bearing on their claim as overall chiefs within a province for example. Macnaught discusses how, amongst the seven independent vanua of Kadavu, the post of Roko had always been assumed by chiefs of Tavuki. In 1908 when Ratu Ifereimi Qasevakatini, a high chief of the vanua of Yale, applied to fill the Roko Tui Kadavu's post, Tavuki chiefs protested against this application as if the post of Roko Tui was created to be their private property. The Tavuki chiefs explained to the Governor through a letter that:

Tavuki, your Excellency, is the foundation of law; here was established the entire work of British Government in the province of Kadavu and it was the great chiefs of Tavuki who began, established, promoted and guaranteed this work.⁵⁹

In this particular case, it is evident that Tavuki's claim for political supremacy on Kadavu emanated from its role in establishing the colonial administration in the province. This case illustrates another way in which politics in the Matanitu iTaukei distorted ancient customary practices.

⁵⁷ See the case of the Ratu mai Verata in this chapter.

⁵⁸ See Scarr, D. 1984. *Fiji: A Short History*. George Allen & Unwin, Sydney: 89.

⁵⁹ Macnaught, 1982: 55-56.

The establishment of the Matanitu iTaukei exacerbated the re-emergence of old rivalries. Macnaught discusses the extension of the old Verata and Bau rivalry after colonization. From the 1890s Verata continuously challenged Bau's newly found power in the Matanitu iTaukei. He explains:

In colonial times the power of Verata was a memory kept alive by their resentment of the prominence of Bauans in the Fijian Administration, and especially in Tailevu province. Shackled by pax Britannica, the very chiefs and people resorted to the art of petty annoyance and impudence.⁶⁰

By 1915, competition, rivalry and dissent had deteriorated to the point where the "Ratu mai Verata",⁶¹ Ratu Penioni Ravoka had completely defied the power of Bau and "declared himself completely independent even as regards the King". Macnaught states:

When accused by Buli Nakelo and twenty four other chiefs in 1921 of trying to divide the province of Tailevu into two, the Ratu encountered that it would be a good thing. I want a separate province to prove my zeal for the government, for it is a long time that we have been relying on Bau and our hearts are not in it.⁶²

The situation between Verata and Bau further deteriorated when in 1922, the Bauan Buli in Verata was refused food which he requested for workers on Bau. The Matanitu iTaukei's solution to the problem was to appoint a "higher ranking" Bauan chief as Buli in Verata in the hope that his Bauan rank would impress and dissuade the defiant people of Verata. However, Verata chiefs and people ignored this promotion and still refused to build the new Buli's house. The story about the Verata – Bau standoff, as explained by Macnaught, had spread Fiji-wide and had insulted Bau's newly found prestige and power in the Matanitu iTaukei.⁶³

The strategy that Bau adopted in an attempt to solve the problem illuminates how Bau's power in eastern Fiji was strengthened by the Matanitu iTaukei. Through lobbying, the Roko Tui of Cakaudrove, Bua, Ra, Macuata and Lau appealed to the Governor for his "lewa Vakaturaga" or chiefly authority.⁶⁴ In Fijian custom, "lewa vakaturaga" is exerted over a people by the ultimate

⁶⁰ Macnaught, 1982: 71.

⁶¹ The highest title for the chief of the chiefdom of Verata.

⁶² Macnaught, 1982: 72.

⁶³ Macnaught, 1982: 72.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 1982: 73.

authority of their chief and traditional leaders. In this case, the governor, being a foreigner, was regarded as a traditional chief through the Matanitu iTaukei. It demonstrates how Fijian customs were used by the colonial state and collaborator chiefs to enable compliance and obedience by the ruled.

Verata's defiance of Bauan demands in the Matanitu iTaukei again occurred in 1925. Verata protested against the Vunivalu of Bau, Ratu Popi Seniloli's request that the province of Tailevu repair fifty-six houses on the island. Ratu Penioni Ravoka insisted that all tikina in the province should have a house each repaired and not just Bau. As a result of Verata's protest, each tikina had a house repaired including Bau. This accounted for the dilapidated appearance of Bau as only one house on the island was repaired.⁶⁵

Verata's reaction to Bauan demands reflected the deep resentment that many indigenous Fijians held against the politics of the Matanitu iTaukei as it intensified traditional rivalry by favouring and consolidating the position of some groups over others. It also exposed the new strategies through which Bau tried to gather labour and resources through the Matanitu iTaukei. Being a resource-scarce island which, in pre-colonial Fiji, depended on the mainland and island tributaries for its survival, control of the Matanitu iTaukei was viewed by some Bauan chiefs as the new means to obtain resources as well as extend and secure political control.⁶⁶ Additionally, Verata's defiance of Bauan control illustrates a classic example of dissent rooted in old rivalry, continued through the politics of the Matanitu iTaukei. It throws up issues of traditional legitimacy as Verata regards her influence in pre-colonial Fiji as more extensive than Bau's rise in the early 1800s.⁶⁷ This period was concurrent with the arrival of the different waves of Europeans, a number of whom like Charles Savage and later the missionaries and Tongans, contributed to the rise of Bau. In this context Verata regards itself as superior

⁶⁵ Macnaught, 1982: 73.

⁶⁶ In pre-colonial Fiji, Bau's traditional area for gathering resources was mainly confined to some islands in the Lomaiviti group and around its immediate domain on mainland Tailevu including Dravo, Kiuva, Buretu and Kaba. These vanua are part of the chiefdom of Bau so they have traditional envoys on Bau.

⁶⁷ Oral history relates the settlement of many vanua in eastern Fiji, including Bau through outward migrations from Verata. These include the settlement of many vanua on the island of Vanua Levu in the three provinces of Bua, Cakaudrove and Macuata. On eastern Viti Levu, Verata migrations went to Bau, Rewa, and as far as islands in the Lau group.

to Bau as it rose to prominence without "European aid". The feeling is best summarized by Laitia Drevula, a chief and Buli of Verata in 1930. He stated:

Verata did not owe allegiance (vakarorogo) to Bau in the ancient times nor does it now. The practice of using government institutions to achieve house building on Bau was corrupt, he argued; there was a customary way of sending envoys (mata) with such requests, and a customary way of complying which had better regard for the dignity of the parties than did the threat of prosecution. Who were the Bauans to talk of upholding ancient customs? ⁶⁸

Bau's attempt to exert overall authority in Tailevu through the Matanitu iTaukei was similar to that which happened in Kadavu through Tavuki's attempt to promote its own interests over other formerly independent vanua.

A number of crucial developments emerged out of the Verata-Bau conflict. The first was concerned with the nature of conflict settlement in 1933 by Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna. The chief assessor of the conflict was a high chief and Vunivalu of Serua province, Ratu Aseri Latianara, whom Macnaught describes as a chief who used to offer "alcoholic hospitality" to other vanua chiefs in Serua so that they could recognize him as the overall chief in the province.⁶⁹ Ratu Penioni Ravoka, defiant to the end, refused to appear at the special hearing of the Native Lands Commission which was held at Naimasimasi, a village in the province of Tailevu. His absence weakened his position, resulting in Ratu Sukuna's ruling in favour of Bau, a case which could well be concluded as "Bau ruling in favour of Bau". The nature of such conflict settlements, where ruling was simply decided upon who showed up or who arrived early to the meeting, only served to escalate, prolong and exacerbate rivalry.⁷⁰

The second and most crucial development which emerged in the end was Ratu mai Verata's fate as he continued to defy colonial orders by chasing both the Catholic priest and Methodist church minister out of Verata. He was declared insane and sent to the lunatic asylum in Suva.⁷¹ The story

⁶⁸ Macnaught, 1982: 73.

⁶⁹ Macnaught, 1982: 57-62.

⁷⁰ Fijians still talk about NLC rulings to determine land tenure, where "punctuality" and "presence" became determinants for ownership rather than an attempt to listen to all parties concerned first.

⁷¹ Macnaught, 1982: 73-74.

demonstrates the fate of those who dared to oppose the colonial government in Fiji. It echoes with the cases of other dissenters such as the Nakorowaiwai people in Ra, the rebellion of western highlanders in the "little war of Viti Levu", Navosavakadua's "Wai ni Tuka" or "Water of Immortality Movement", and Apolosi Nawai's "Viti Kabani" movement. While it was easy to exile western Fijians who would not have easily resisted the wrath of the colonial state and Matanitu iTaukei, given the rank and status of the Ratu mai Verata, exiling a high eastern Fijian chief with a large following, would have been a real challenge. The lunatic asylum was the most appropriate form of sanction to escape the wrath of Ratu Mai Verata's people who would have reacted. The strategies adopted to settle such conflicts highlights why the colonial state and its ensuing Matanitu iTaukei exacerbated dissent, rivalry and protest amongst indigenous Fijians.

Narratives of Dissent, Rivalry and Protest

Any study of Fijian political dissent and protest must be conducted with an approach to an understanding of Fijian culture in all its diversity and complexity. Hempenstall and Rutherford in explaining Duncan's definition of resistance, state that resistance is a failure to cooperate while protests are actions taken to enable the introduction of positive changes into a system.⁷² Resistance movements were common in the pre-colonial as well as in the early years of colonization in Fiji. They represent an utmost attempt to express alternative views within a community or society.

In a socio-political environment of cultural heterogeneity such as that found within Fijian society, dissent will be viewed as a normal state of nature since the differences amongst social groups are the first ground for asserting political autonomy and a sense of uniqueness and independence. Nayacakalou, in explaining the heterogeneous nature of the Fijian society states that:

⁷² Hempenstall, P. and Rutherford, N. 1984. *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific*. Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji: 2.

At each level, there are broad characteristics peculiar to specific groups... some dialects are largely unintelligible in other regions, and because of differences in geographical environment there are corresponding differences in economic activity and, to some extent, in outlook in life generally. These are not the only differences; there are internal sub-divisions within the villages. At each level there are distinct feelings of community of interest as well as separateness, and for each group there are distinct patterns of co-activity and, therefore, distinct patterns of leadership.⁷³

Differences make any attempt by any group to dominate another group, a challenging one or in most cases, an impossible political endeavor. In pre-colonial times political dissent was rooted in different factors such as opposition to chiefly rule or even outright rivalry for political power leading to power struggle. Dissent also had different forms of manifestations, producing different political outcomes. Political dissent which was rooted in power rivalry also contributed to indigenous structural formations such as the vanua and matanitu. These are indigenous political constructs within which power is contested.

The differences in customary practices throughout the various vanua in the Fiji group founded and propelled the "spirit of dissent". Routledge, in discussing the issue of power control and rivalry in the 19th century Fijian polities, states that:

One result of the Battle of Kaba had been to confirm the separate existence of the several chiefdoms of the Koro Sea. Whatever the superficial implications of the Tui Viti title, the system of discrete political entities contending with one another had survived. Cakobau had little success at exercising power outside the traditional reaches of Bauan influence, and none at all when he had tried to intervene in the politics of the interior of Viti Levu. Nor had Ma'afu's Tovata genuinely transcended the individuality of the Vanua Levu chiefdoms.⁷⁴

Dissent in its political context demonstrated a sense of independence and the will to resist various forms of subordination and subjugation. Hampenstall and Rutherford, in support of Nayacakalou's earlier argument, state that:

⁷³ Nayacakalou, 1975: 1-2.

⁷⁴ Routledge, D. 1985. *Matanitu: The Struggle for Power in Early Fiji*. Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji: 121.

Protest in the Pacific Islands is of particular interest because of the amazing diversity of cultural and historical influences (there are many more different language and culture groups in the Pacific than in any other part of the world, relative to population size).⁷⁵

While eastern and northeastern Fijian polities appeared unified, their evolution had been dynamic, with no chiefdom controlling power permanently. Rivalry and dissent propelled the rise and demise of powerful chiefdoms. In pre-colonial Fiji the attempt to dominate or subjugate led to various forms of dissent, often resulting in warfare. Political dissent on Bau in 1832 led to a rebellion which saw Tanoa, Vunivalu of Bau flee to Somosomo in Taveuni. He was protected by the Tui Cakau. Again in 1854, the Tui Cakau, Tuikilakila, was murdered by his own brother.⁷⁶

The nature and causes of dissent change over time. While pre-colonial forms of dissent and rivalry often resulted in wars, those which emerged during colonization were often expressed through passive or outright resistance or through millenarian forms. Kaplan and Rosenthal discuss the origin of the 1873 Battle of Nakorowaiwai in Ra and link it with its new extended form through Navosavakadua's "Wai ni Tuka" or "Spirit of Immortality" millenarian movement in the 1880s. The Battle of Nakorowaiwai was caused by resistance to Bauan exploitation and ambition to extend Bauan political power into western Viti Levu, resulting in the murder of a Bauan labour recruiter in Ra. Bau's retaliation resulted in the Battle at Nakorowaiwai. The Tuka movement was a show of resistance against colonial and eastern Fijian chiefly rule through Bau. These two forms of political dissent were exacerbated by colonial agendas. Kaplan and Rosenthal argue that:

If the Ra case represents permutation of the "classic" Fijian polity and "classic" Fijian historical dynamism, it also requires us to take account of the colonial context. In Fiji in the 1870s, the historical processes of violence and fertility, disorder and order, were no longer simply Fijian historical processes. New actors, British officials with their own colonial project, sought to order and reorder Fijians, to create a colony, yet another form of "state", yet this one envisioned in British cultural terms.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Hempenstall and Rutherford, 1984: 1.

⁷⁶ See Derrick, 1946: 58 – 61; 63.

⁷⁷ Kaplan, M. and Rosenthal, M. Volume 102 No. 2, 1993. "Battlements, Temples And the Landscape of the Tuka: The Archaeological Record of a Cultural Transformation in 19th Century Fiji" in *The Journal of Polynesian Society*. University of Auckland, New Zealand: 122.

Dissent movements in the colonial period were directed against the merging of colonial goals with the expansionist projects of chiefs in eastern and northeastern Fiji. Brewster explains that "Navosavakadua" or "the one who talks once" expressed his abhorrence of the new exploitative alliance when he stated:

that the world would be shortly tavuki, which is the Fijian for being turned upside-down, and when that occurred all existing affairs would be reversed; the whites would serve the natives, the chiefs would become the common people and the latter would take their places...He had inflamed the interior of Viti Levu with these ideas, creating great excitement, and almost causing the cessation of ordinary work and routine in expectation of that great day when the world would be judged...He had compounded a new religion of the old Fijian myths and what he had read in the Bible.⁷⁸

Such utterances carried heavy penalty in the early years of colonization and Navosavakadua met his fate through deportation, resulting in death. "Human trade" and deportation became a means of suppressing dissent in the quest for political control. Navosavakadua's fate was sealed after his death while on exile in Rotuma. A letter from Government House in Suva to the Secretary of State for the Colonies explained:

I beg leave to submit the following remarks in regard to the several cases in question...Dugumoi, alias Navosavakadua. The necessity for deporting this man to the island of Rotuma occasioned the passing of Ordinance No. XX of 1887. Dugumoi was guilty of heathenism practices including "Tuka" (worship of ancestral spirits). He died at Rotuma on 13th June 1897, shortly before the expiration of his term of deportation...Certain of his followers discredit the report of his death, as he claims to be immortal.⁷⁹

Much of the Fijian resistance after the period of European contact and in the early years of British colonization was an attempt to resist internal domination and internal colonialism which were a result of the alliances formed by Europeans and later British colonizers with the eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefly oligarchy.⁸⁰ In the pre-colonial era, such alliances enabled various forms of mercantile trade to occur, with chiefs abusing their power

⁷⁸ Brewster, A.B. 1922. *The Hill Tribes of Fiji*. Seeley Service, London: 237. See also Sutherland, W. 1992: 41.

⁷⁹ See letter from Government House, Suva, Fiji, dated 26th April, 1902, to The Secretary of State for the Colonies. Reference No. Colonial Secretary's Office Despatches to the Secretary of State, 2042/18/92. National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 136.

⁸⁰ For "internal domination" and "internal colonialism" see also Durutalo, S. 1985: 61-119.

and taking advantage of their people's labour to assemble trade products such as sandalwood, beche-de-mer, etc. In 1851, when Cakobau and Varani⁸¹ attempted to collect beche-de-mer from Cakobau's vassals in some islands to pay for Cakobau's luxury vessel, they encountered passive resistance and outright defiance. Derrick explains that:

Quantities of bags were made to hold the cured product, and sent far and wide among the islands; but the people either grumbled, working grudgingly, or refused to have anything to do with paying for the ship. When Cakobau visited the islands...instead of beche-de-mer he found empty bags, others had taken them and let them rot on the ground, and some had burnt them.⁸²

Vessels and other trade goods such as firearms received by chiefs in exchange for local products contributed tremendously to the rise of powerful chiefs in eastern and northeastern Fiji.

The nature and extent of the alliances changed with time. With the arrival of Christianity and later colonization by the same imperial power, internal competition for power control intensified. Simultaneous to these changes was the desire by some chiefs, like Cakobau, to subjugate once independent clans under their rule. Such efforts were always met with resistance. In 1875, resistance to Christianity, Colonial rule and eastern Fijian political dominance resulted in a number of wars, ending with the "Little War of Viti Levu" between 1875 and 1876. It began with the assault on various inland Viti Levu clans including independent local political units of Magodro, Qaliyalatina, Cawanisa, Navatusila, Naloto, Yakete, Namataku, Bemana, Conua, Nasikawa, Mavua, and Ruwailevu.⁸³ Durutalo explains that through oral sources in their vanua, Bau's attempt to subjugate the inland tribes of Viti Levu commenced with the rule of Nailatikau between 1815 and 1820. This was an unsuccessful endeavour. Again between 1868 and 1869 two armies sent by Cakobau tried to attack tribes in central and western Viti Levu to avenge the death of missionary Thomas Baker who was killed by the Navatusila people. This was again a defeat for the Bauan armies.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Varani was chief of Viwa, an island close to Bau, during Cakobau's time.

⁸² Derrick, 1946:106.

⁸³ These independent polities are located on the upper reaches of both the Ba and Sigatoka rivers in central western Viti Levu.

⁸⁴ See Durutalo, S. 1985: 87-88.

In the case of Cakobau's ambition to conquer the inland Viti Levu clans, the ambition was a combination of Fijian historical process to enable territorial expansion and personal gain as well as European colonial project. France explains the ambition of both Cakobau and white settlers, in a quote from the settler press, as:

We understand that it is the intention of the Government [Cakobau's 1871 government], at a very early stage, to initiate measures for the inauguration of a military force to subjugate the mountaineers of Viti Levu and occupy their land. Of course, all acquainted with Fiji are aware that there exists a mighty country, hundreds of thousands of acres of well-watered and fertile soil, highly calculated for the settlement of an extensive, intelligent, and progressive population...[the savagery and heathenism of the mountaineers described] Their complete coercion there would be no difficulty in accomplishing; and their deportation in small lots as labourers to the planters, where they might be Christianized and civilized would be a work which the world would approve.⁸⁵

In 1873 Major Fitzgerald led another assault in inland western Viti Levu and survivors from Magodro, Qaliyalatina and Naloto were deported from their vanua and sold to white settlers. Their land was taken by force and included in the offer of cession to the British crown.⁸⁶ Prior to native deportation and land sale in inland western Viti Levu, the Lovoni people in Ovalau suffered the same fate through Cakobau when they challenged his claim in the Lomaiviti group after the formation of the 1871 Cakobau government in Levuka. Cakobau's forces could not defeat the powerful Lovoni people. However, three weeks after the attack on their fort they were enticed to make peace with the help of Reverend Frederick Langham who had made deals with Cakobau for their arrest. The Lovoni people were sold as plantation labourers at three pounds per head and their land sold by auction.⁸⁷

The final assault on inland western Viti Levu in the "The Little War of Viti Levu" campaign occurred between 1875 and 1876. Captain Harding with the help of Cakobau's native constabulary used firearms to attack Nakorosule (Wainimala), Nabutautau (Navatusila), and Nacule (Magodro). Survivors,

⁸⁵ France, 1969: 94.

⁸⁶ See France, 1969: 94-95 and see also Durutalo, S. 1985: 89.

⁸⁷ See France, P. 1969: 94. My vanua of Namena has traditional relations and political alliance with the "Tui Wailevu" (high chief of Lovoni) and people. Stories about the Lovoni massacre were narrated to me orally by my father. Since the massacre occurred, oral history has been a medium for transmitting the events by those in the kinship system.

including women and children, were removed to work on European farms belonging to supporters of the Cakobau government in eastern Fiji.⁸⁸ Descendants of the Magodro exiles still live in Navaga village on Koro Island in the Lomaiviti group.

The continuation of Navosavakadua's Tuka movement was followed by other events in the early twentieth century with the emergence of a popular and widespread dissent movement. This was Apolosi R. Nawai's "Viti Kabani" (Fiji Company) movement. Nawai of Nadi in western Viti Levu agitated against the economic marginalisation of indigenous Fijians by the colonial government and their eastern and north eastern chiefly collaborators in the system of indirect rule. Although Nawai was a former disciple of Navosavakadua's Tuka movement and his form of dissent expressed both outright resistance to colonial rule coupled with millenarian undertones, Sutherland argues that:

It was the first clear expression of organized struggle by the Fijian peasantry against not only colonial rule but also the underlying system of exploitation which it served – capitalism.⁸⁹

In general the root cause and nature of his dissent bear similarities with earlier dissent movements in western Viti Levu. Perhaps, also encouraged by Governor Everard Im Thurn's liberal economic policy of individualism and the desire to expose Fijians to the rigours of the modern world, Nawai formed the Viti Kabani as an attempt to promote Fijian business interests in terms of directly exporting agricultural products such as bananas and coconuts which were produced by Fijians and sold to European and Chinese middle men for overseas export.⁹⁰ Nawai said that Fijians could earn more if they formed a cooperative in order to directly export agricultural products. By 1915, a "Fiji

⁸⁸ See Durutalo, S. 1985: 97. See also Scarr, D. 1984: 75.

⁸⁹ Sutherland, W. 1992: 42.

⁹⁰ In his first meeting with the chiefs in 1905, Governor Im Thurn explained that Gordon's "preservation exercise" on indigenous Fijians which saw the creation of a separate Native Administration with its communal land tenure system, was not positively contributing to the economic advancement of indigenous Fijians and the colonial economy. He had plans for native land sales, which occurred between 1905 – 1908, and the abolishment of the Native Administration. Im Thurn wanted Fijians to become individual tenants just like the new European settlers. Whether Im Thurn had intended for Fijians to be partakers in colonial capitalism or whether he just wanted land for European settlers, needs in depth research. This idea of individualism in terms of economic entrepreneurship may have attracted Nawai. For a comprehensive reading on governor Everard Im Thurn's policy on native Fijians see France, P. 1969: 151-164. See also Sutherland, W. 1992: 42-44.

Produce Agency" office had already been established at Depot Road in Suva.⁹¹

Nawai's ambition to form a cooperative amongst indigenous Fijians was not only viewed by the colonial government as evil but was also regarded by some local European entrepreneurs as a business challenge which had to be suppressed. In a letter addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Acting Governor in 1916, Eyre Hutson, discusses the proposal from a Lt. Colonel McOwen to deport Apolosi if agitation occurred prior to his release from gaol. The letter also discusses the concern of a local European trader regarding Apolosi's cooperative activities:

I enclose for your information copy of correspondence with Mr. Barrow...I concur entirely with the views expressed by Lieutenant Colonel McOwen in his minute of the 13th instant and I shall place those views before the Governor on his arrival. I am now convinced that unless something, at present unforeseen, occurs before the date for Avolosi Nawai's release from gaol in September next, it will be necessary for the Governor to deport him to Rotuma or to some other distant island in the colony...Nothing definite is known about Mr. G. L. Barrows' history and antecedents. He is a European of undoubted education...some years ago he was connected with some newspaper in Melbourne. He has been in the colony for some considerable time, and has been engaged in keeping a small shop and conducting a trading business in a native town on the borders of Serua and Colo West provinces...He advocates that the government should step in and arbitrarily interfere with an alleged cooperative movement among the natives intended for their mutual benefit because he is convinced that there is some movement underlying that of agricultural and trade cooperation which has sedition and open opposition to the established government as its real aim and foundation.⁹²

The Viti Kabani was a threat in its business focus, its millenarian orientation and in general its challenge on the colonial administration and its Matanitu iTaukei neotraditional order. Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, writing to the Secretary for Native Affairs on 12 March, 1917, expressed outrage when Nawai, at a public rally, asked his audience:

Who is the governor, the Colonial Secretary, or the Secretary for Native Affairs? What are they to me?⁹³

⁹¹ See Letter dated March 17th, 1915 from Apolosi R. Nawai to the Buli Tuva, Vono Nadroga. Reference No. CSO MP 10313/14 National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji.

⁹² See letter from Acting Governor, Eyre Hutson, dated 18th April, 1916, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Reference No. Colonial Secretary's Office Despatch to Secretary of State 2501/1916. National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji.

⁹³ Scarr, D. (Ed). *Fiji: The Three Legged Stool*. Macmillan Education : 55.

In the statement Nawai not only belittled those addressed but questioned the basis of their authority as well. Sukuna in his letter continued that:

Such a question conveys a very different impression to the native mind from what it does to the European...the native cannot conceive any such statement being made except from a superior about an inferior. The result is that in the more ignorant parts of Fiji, the Colos, Ba, Namosi and other parts of Ra, Apolosi's evil influence is very strongly marked. In these districts Apolosi is able to make all sorts of statements and do all sorts of things...He has thus become in the native eye a sort of superman.⁹⁴

Nawai directly challenged both Sukuna and the authorities which he represented. These were the colonial state through the Matanitu iTaukei and Bau's attempt to extend her domain through chiefs such as Sukuna. By labeling various areas as the ignorant parts of Fiji, Sukuna projected a condescending view of those concerned as well as blaming their dissent on ignorance. These areas comprised independent vanua and in the traditional sense did not recognize Sukuna's chiefly authority. Sukuna's reasoning overlooked, deliberate or otherwise, the history of dissent within Fijian society and Fijian rejection of both colonial and collaborator chiefs' expansionist agenda in Fiji. The suppression of dissent movements such as Nawai's Viti Kabani showed the power of the colonial state and collaborator chiefs in the use of force to subjugate dissenters.

In December 1959, the suppression of the Oil Workers Strike in Suva, again with the use of collaborator chiefs, was yet another classic case of the merging of colonial agenda and collaborator chiefs' interest. However, on the other side of the divide was also a multi-ethnic grouping of workers. This time around the European employers were up against a better organised and more powerful multi-ethnic force through the trade union. Hempenstall and Rutherford explain that:

⁹⁴ Ibid. 19: 55-56.

The alienation of the Fijian working class in the towns, and the stresses caused by the high level of unemployment and the low level of wages, produced another phenomenon – a partial fusing of the various ethnic groupings of workers into something like a single proletariat with common interests and a common enemy – who were mostly,...white. The European community was totally unaware of the alignments that were developing. They believed that the Fijians were the most loyal and devoted of protégés who depended on their European allies to protect them from the more economically sophisticated Indians.⁹⁵

The strike by the Oil workers union members, who were affiliated to the Wholesale and Retail Workers General Union (WRWGU), was led by Apisai Tora, then President of the north west branch of the WRWGU, and James Anthony, the secretary of the Wholesale and Retail Workers General Union. From April 1959, the Oil Workers Union were basically demanding for a wage review. By November 1959, the union demanded a pay rise from three pounds and six pence to six pounds plus a forty hour week sick leave and fourteen days paid annual leave. When these demands were not met, strike began on 7 December, 1959.⁹⁶

Eastern Fijian chiefs such as the Vunivalu of Bau, Ratu Sir George Cakobau, his cousin Ratu Edward Cakobau and relative Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, appealed to Fijian oil workers in the Fijian language (Bauan dialect). Cakobau reminded the Fijian oil workers to remember the name and reputation of Fiji in whatever decision they took.⁹⁷ Mara, on the other hand, although appealing equally to Fijian workers, in the end acknowledged that the strike was “perfectly legitimate”. In the preceding Commission of Enquiry following the strike Mara informed the Commission, “that if Suva were burned down, the Fijians would lose nothing except the record of their debts”⁹⁸.

Hempenstall and Rutherford argue that:

The appearance of a coalition between Indian workers and Fijian workers combined as a more or less united proletariat against white domination and exploitation, was very disturbing to the chiefs. One of their leading spokesman, Ratu Sir K. K. T. Mara, described it as a revolution.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Hempenstall and Rutherford, 1984: 74.

⁹⁶ See Hempenstall and Rutherford, 1984: 75.

⁹⁷ See Hempenstall and Rutherford, 1984: 83-85.

⁹⁸ See Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese, 1997: 65.

⁹⁹ Hempenstall and Rutherford, 1984: 85.

In the era of decolonisation, as seen in the 1959 oil workers strike in Suva, the nature of dissent had undergone change within Fijian society. A new challenge which confronted chiefs in the Matanitu iTaukei was the formation of multiethnic alliances through trade union movements.¹⁰⁰ Solving such conflicts became more complex than the “outright suppression and deportation strategy” which was adopted in the first half of the colonization period. New types of dissent such as industrial strikes, because they involved new factors, dissidents who were better organised through trade unions, and a multiethnic front, became the most formidable challenge for the eastern and northeastern chiefly oligarchy as Fiji moved into the era of independence and party politics.

An easy way out for solving such conflicts was to continue the “divide and rule” strategy of the colonial government. While Nawai aired his dissatisfaction with the colonial and collaborator system with a millenarian undertone, Tora used a more organised trade union movement as a means of dissent. The chiefly “strike-breakers” reminded Fijian strikers that they had shamed the good name of Fijians and that they had been duped by Indian members of the trade union.¹⁰¹ While Sukuna blamed Nawai’s supporters as coming from “ignorant parts of Fiji”, the chiefly strike-breakers blamed Fijian support of the 1959 oil workers strike on their being gullible to Indian ploys. These instances of dissent in Fijian political history has highlighted the use of the “denial strategy” in terms of the need to acknowledge that grass root Fijians had economic needs. Additionally, the “culture of respect” explanation was used by the chiefs on Fijian workers to deny their modern economic rights. Nevertheless, Fijian dissent was continued and fully developed through the formation of political parties between 1960 and 1999.

With ongoing dissent in the period of colonization, the attempt by collaborator chiefs to monopolise power within Fijian society was reflected in the

¹⁰⁰ In my interview with Senator Apisai Tora, he stated that the trade union movement prepared him to enter politics and facilitated the formation of his Western Democratic Party in the early 1960s. Interview with Senator Apisai Tora, 5 June, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba province. Tora and James Anthony were the two leaders of the 1959 Oil Workers Strike in Suva.

¹⁰¹ See Hempenstall and Rutherford, 1984: 85.

membership of the Native Council and Legislative Council between 1911 and 1963.

The Matanitu iTaukei: Making of Modern Fijian Leaders and Party politics

The contribution and influence of the Matanitu iTaukei in founding the modern political system was a fundamental one. Future leadership prospects in Fiji emanated from within the institution. Individuals, especially eastern Fijian chiefs and a few well-educated commoners who dominated the Fijian political scene during and immediately after decolonization, were groomed for leadership in the colonial period.

A focus on the membership of the Legislative Council since 1904 confirms the fundamental role played by the Matanitu iTaukei in preparing and promoting eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs for leadership positions. By 1911 the Native member for the Legislative Council was Ratu Joni Madaraiwiwi, who was Roko Tui Tailevu, and in 1913 Ratu Antonio Rabici, Roko Tui Cakaudrove was also a member. The Native members of the Legislative Council were nominees of the Native Council (later Council of Chiefs).¹⁰² The dominance of eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs in the Native Council provided them with a better chance of being members of the Legislative Council.

Their control of both Native Council and hence as native members of the Legislative Council continued throughout the period of colonization. In 1943 the Native members of the Legislative Council nominated by the Native Council were Ratu George Tuisawau, the Roko Tui Dreketi,¹⁰³ Ratu G. W. Lalabalavu, the Tui Cakau, Ratu Tiale W. T. Vuiyasawa (son of Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi and brother of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna), Ratu George Toganivalu, chief of Bau, and Ratu Edward Cakobau, a high chief of Bau and cousin of the Vunivalu of Bau.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² See *Fiji's Blue Book for the year 1916: Compiled from Records in the Colonial Secretary's Office*. Government Printer, Suva: 85.

¹⁰³ The "Roko Tui Dreketi" is the highest title in the Matanitu of Burebasaga in eastern Fiji.

¹⁰⁴ See *Fiji Legislative Council Debates 1943*. Government Printer, Colony of Fiji, Suva: i

In 1945, a major restructuring occurred within the Matanitu iTaukei or Native Administration. In the 1945 re-structuring, the Fijian Affairs Board (FAB) was created to replace the Native Regulations Board (NRB). An aspect of restructuring in 1945 involved the reduction in the number of provinces to fourteen. These were Ba, Bua, Cakaudrove, Kadavu, Lau, Lomaiviti, Macuata, Naitasiri, Nadroga/Navosa, Namosi, Ra, Rewa, Serua, and Tailevu. **(See map on 1945 provincial boundaries).**

Eastern and northeastern dominance of the Matanitu iTaukei as well as Native membership of the Legislative Council continued even after the 1945 Fijian Affairs restructure. Additionally, members of the FAB were the Fijian members of the Legislative Council, normally nominated by the Governor from members of the Native Council. Another member, who was legal advisor, was also appointed by the governor. In this respect, Qalo explains that the FAB was a committee of the Legislative Council and the Council of Chiefs.¹⁰⁵ Practically, the FAB was a committee of eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs. In 1948, Native members of the Legislative Council who were also members of the Fijian Affairs Board, were Ratu George Tuisawau, Ratu Tiale W. T. Vuiyasawa, Ratu George Toganivalu, Ratu Epeli N. Maitaitini and Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna who was Secretary for Fijian Affairs and official member, and the first Fijian commoner, from the province of Tailevu, was Joeli K. Ravai.¹⁰⁶ Membership remained the same in 1949 except for Rewa high chief Ratu Epeli N. Maitaitini who was replaced by Ratu Edward Cakobau.¹⁰⁷

The membership of the Fijian Affairs Board and Legislative Council was still controlled by eastern and northeastern Fijians between 1950 and 1963, when for the first time elections for membership of the Legislative Council occurred. In 1953, members consisted of Ratu George Tuisawau, Joeli K. Ravai, Ratu Tiale W. T. Vuiyasawa, and Ratu George Cakobau.¹⁰⁸ Ravuama Vunivalu, another prominent eastern Fijian commoner from Tailevu, became a new

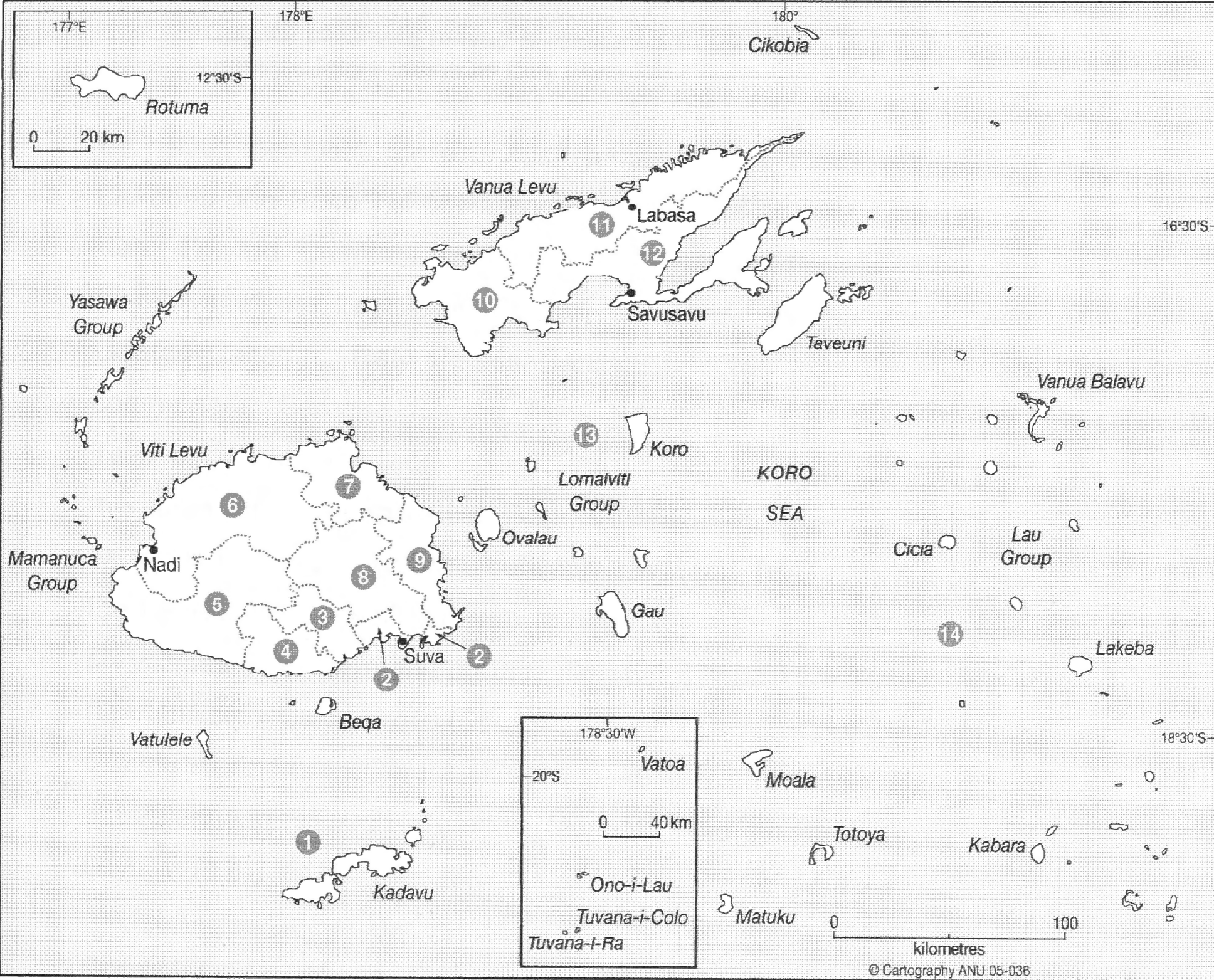
¹⁰⁵ See Qalo, R.R. 1984. *Divided We Stand: Local Government in Fiji*. The Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Fiji: 37.

¹⁰⁶ See *Legislative Council Debates 1948*. Government Printer, Colony of Fiji, Suva: i

¹⁰⁷ See *Legislative Council Debates: Session of Nov-Dec., 1949*. Government Printer, Colony of Fiji, Suva: i

¹⁰⁸ See *Legislative Council Debates 1953*. Government Printer, Colony of Fiji, Suva: i.

1945 PROVINCIAL BOUNDARIES



1 KADAVU	4 SERUA	7 RA	10 BUA	13 LOMAIVITI
2 REWA	5 NADROGA / NAVOSA	8 NAITASIRI	11 MACUATA	14 LAU
3 NAMOSI	6 BA	9 TAILEVU	12 CAKAUDROVE	

member of the Legislative Council and the Fijian Affairs Board. Additionally, prominent eastern Fijian chief, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, also became member in 1953.¹⁰⁹ The elite membership of the Legislative Council was defended and maintained even when Governor Sir Ronald Garvey enquired about the election of Fijian members into the Legislative Council. Mara stated that:

In 1954, in response to an enquiry by Governor Sir Ronald Garvey about election of the Fijian members to the Legislative Council, the Council of Chiefs moved a resolution to the effect that they would prefer to leave things as they were.¹¹⁰

By 1956, members more or less remained the same with Ratu George Cakobau, the Roko Tui of Nadroga and Navosa as the official member, and Ratu Edward Cakobau continuing his membership. By 1959, the Fijian members of the Legislative Council were Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Ratu George Cakobau, Ratu Penaia Ganilau, and two prominent eastern Fijian commoners, Semesa Sikivou from Rewa and Ravuama Vunivalu from Tailevu.¹¹¹ With the addition of Ratu Edward Cakobau, the 1959 Fijian members of the Legislative Council fought the first Legislative Council elections in 1963.¹¹² Overall, between 1911 and 1963 native membership of the Legislative Council revolved around only four provinces and specifically six villages in eastern and northeastern Fiji. These were Tailevu (Bau), Rewa (Lomanikoro), Cakaudrove (Somosomo), and Lau (Tubou). Both Vunivalu and Sikivou were from different villages in Tailevu and Rewa. High chiefs from other vanua in Fiji such as Verata, Macuata, Bua, and those from western Viti Levu were excluded in this network.

Consolidation of an Orthodoxy: From the Matanitu iTaukei (Fijian Administration) to the "Soqosoqo I Taukei" (Fijian Association)

As discussed in this chapter, the Matanitu iTaukei's role as the foremost institution of rule for indigenous Fijians inevitably invoked an all-

¹⁰⁹ See *Legislative Council Debates 1956*. Government Printer, Colony of Fiji, Suva: i.

¹¹⁰ Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese. *The Pacific Way: A Memoir*. 1997. Centre for Pacific Islands Studies, University of Hawaii, Pacific Islands Development Programme, East-West Centre, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu: 65.

¹¹¹ See *Legislative Council Debates, 1959*. Government Printer, Colony of Fiji, Suva: i.

¹¹² See Chapter four.

encompassing official leadership status amongst the ruled. Its political control during the ninety-six years of colonization extended into the area of party politics when on February 18, 1956 leading chiefs in the Fijian Affairs Board, such as Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, under the guidance of Sir Maurice Scott, its legal adviser, formed the Fijian Association (FA). Succeeding Sir Maurice Scott was Sir John Falvey, a lawyer politician who was later instrumental in the formation of the Alliance Party in 1966.¹¹³ Such concerted effort between prominent Europeans in the colonial administration and elite chiefly members of the Fijian Affairs Board in the formation of the Fijian Association and later, the Alliance Party further consolidated and strengthened their ascendant position. This time around it was in the realm of party politics.

The Fijian Association claimed to represent the perceived interests of all indigenous Fijians. Such claim was based on the philosophy of “vanua, lotu and Matanitu” upon which the orthodoxy and hierarchical leadership within the Matanitu iTaukei was founded.¹¹⁴ The evolving ideological foundation of the Matanitu iTaukei consisted of “the trinity” of “Vanua, Lotu, and Matanitu”, giving it a firm foundation within Fijian society. The vanua was a conceptualization of Fijian culture and its traditional polities according to the eastern and northeastern Fijian socio-political hierarchy since the arrival of Europeans. This vanua conceptualization assumed a neat hierarchy of polities with the Bauan chiefdom and the Matanitu of Kubuna being the most dominant throughout Fiji. The other two Matanitu from eastern and northern

¹¹³ See also Norton, R. 1990. *Race and Politics in Fiji* (2nd ed). University of Queensland Press, Australia: 46.

¹¹⁴ The eastern and northeastern Fijian orthodoxy evolved in eastern and northeastern Fiji with the rise of Bau and the eclipse of Verata in the late 1700s and early 1800s. It is a belief system which was strengthened after the arrival of the missionaries in 1835 to promote and justify the existence of “cultural homogeneity” within indigenous Fijian society. Outside interference in eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefly rivalry contributed to the final emergence of the chiefdom of Bau as the most dominant political power in eastern Fiji since the late 18th century. This claim was affirmed by the missionaries and reinforced by British colonization. A neat hierarchy, with Bau at its apex, was assumed to have been present throughout Fiji. The formation of the Native Administration “Matanitu iTaukei” was based on this premise. This thesis argues that the formation of the Fijian Association Arm of the Alliance Party in 1956 continued the promotion of the orthodoxy. However, the claim of cultural homogeneity and the supremacy of the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy has been refuted by Fijian historians and by indigenous Fijians themselves. See also Derrick, R.A. 1946. *A History of Fiji* (Vol.1) Government Printing Press, Colony of Fiji.; Routledge, D. 1985. *Matanitu: The Struggle for Power in Early Fiji*. Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji.; Baleiwaqa, T. 2003. “Rerevaka na Kalou ka Doka na Tui”: Fear God and Honour the King. PhD Thesis, The Australian National University.

Fiji, Burebasaga and Tovata, fall in line behind Kubuna. All Vanua in Fiji are assumed to belong to either of the three eastern Fijian Matanitu of Kubuna, Burebasaga and Tovata. This has always been contested ground. Macuata, for example, regards itself as independent of Tovata. Likewise, western Fijians have always proclaimed their independence. In my interview with Tora, he stated:

Eastern Fijians say that western Fiji belongs either to the Burebasaga or Kubuna Confederacy. That is not true. We are independent. That is why Ba is one of the most troublesome provinces in Fiji...the need for unity is so difficult.¹¹⁵

“Lotu” as an ideology represented the new religion of Christianity, more so its Wesleyan Methodist version which was introduced by William Cross and David Cargill in 1835. It depicted a time of the ascension from the period of “darkness”, “evil” or “butobuto” to the period of light or “rarama”. Eastern Fijian chiefdoms and chiefs who received Christianity first have always been depicted in a positive light as the champions of “rarama” within Fijian society. Additionally, their social and political status were formalized and strengthened through the new “Lotu”. A new form of Fijian identity emerged through the acceptance of the new Lotu. Since 1835 Christianity justified the power of existing chiefs and chiefly authority through a biblical translation which reads:

Ni sa sega na turaga sa tubu wale, mai vua ga na Kalou: Ko ira era sa turaga tu sa lesi ira na Kalou.¹¹⁶

There is no authority, but by act of God, and existing authorities are instituted by him.¹¹⁷

In the Fijian translation, the critical words are “authority”, which in this context is taken to mean “turaga”, and God or “Kalou”. However, the word “turaga” in English means “chief” and not “authority”. This translation was a deliberate social construction to validate the authority of chiefs who acted as gate keepers for the new Christian religion. The chiefs who represent authority and power are said to be ordained by God. This lends legitimacy to newly created authorities and institutions like the Great Council of Chiefs in Fijian society.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Apisai Tora, June 5, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province.

¹¹⁶ A iVola iPaula vei ira na Kai Roma, Wase 13 Tikina e 1, A iVola Tabu ni Lotu Vakarisito.

¹¹⁷ Romans 13:1, New English Bible 1961, Popular Edition.

The introduction and consolidation of the Lotu in Fiji was never neutral as the Missionaries had to recognize the chiefly institution first and foremost for their own survival. Chiefly families and vanua which openly received the new Lotu were favoured more than those who resisted. Initially, there was a symbiotic relationship between Christianity and the Chiefly system, especially the Bauan version of the chiefly institution. Baleiwaqa argues that even though Tanoa, Vunivalu of Bau, was not a Christian convert himself, his recognition and open policy in supporting the new Lotu strengthened the bond between the chiefly system, specifically its eastern and northern version, and Christianity.¹¹⁸

The introduction of a system of ecclesiastical administration which was referred to as the “connexional government”, with Tanoa as the Patron was the first attempt at political unity through a common religion, Christianity. Fijian society was targeted as the basic unit of the connexional government. Additionally, the involvement of former graduates of Hoxton and Richmond Theological Institute in England, where the promotion of the classics was regarded as equally important as theology, explained the need to search for and establish a source of relationship between the new religion and the target society. The Wesleyan Methodist graduates of Hoxton and Richmond were trained to be able to defend what they believed and it would have been easier if this was connected or related with aspects of beliefs in the targeted society.¹¹⁹

Contact with the chiefdom of Bau, the most powerful chiefdom in eastern and northeastern Fiji at the time of the arrival of the missionaries in 1835, provided a starting point. Mythology that traces the rise of Bau was justified by the missionaries in enabling the survival of the “symbiotic theory” of relationships between the missionaries and the Bauan version of the chiefly system.¹²⁰ A marriage between the material basis of the chiefly institution and the spiritual

¹¹⁸ Baleiwaqa, T. 2003: 67.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 2003: ix.

¹²⁰ The Bauan version of the chiefly system was the core of the eastern and northeastern sociopolitical hierarchy after the decline of the Verata chiefdom. It was recognized within the three eastern and northeastern Fijian matanitu. However, it must be emphasized that the hierarchy was not clearly demarcated nor legitimacies within it clearly defined as certain vanua within the assumed hierarchy occasionally declare their independence.

basis of Christianity enabled the survival of both. Christianity justified and froze the once dynamic chiefly institution as belonging to those who reigned supreme at the time of their arrival. On the other hand, the chiefly institution protected and promoted the spiritual role of Christianity and missionaries in Fiji. The missionaries promoted and justified the secular as well as the spiritual role of the chiefs. This spirituality was no longer based on the old Lotu through the Bete or sacred chief, but was anchored on the Trinity of the new Lotu representing "The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit". Missionaries took over the role of the "Bete" or Sacred Chiefs as the new mediators between the Christian God and the Fijian people, displacing the role of the Bete as the mediator between Fijian Gods and people. The worship of one God was the first uniting factor amongst Fijians. It inevitably facilitated a new form of unity within the eastern and northeastern Fijian hierarchical orthodoxy.

Institutions needed each other for their own survival. Christian wars of conversion were waged by mostly eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs to consolidate a dual power system within Fijian society; that of loyal chiefs and the power of the Wesleyan Methodist Church as an institution. The new Lotu replaced the many forms of traditional religions and its social system and, over time, was accepted by Fijians as an integral part of Fijian culture.¹²¹ It justified the Bauan version of the chiefly institution and the existence of the socio-political hierarchy within which it was found as "of God", in this case meaning "the Christian God". Bau's struggle for political supremacy in eastern Fiji was sealed by the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries and their justification that Bau's claim to paramountcy was "of God".

The struggle for paramountcy was extended to other parts of Fiji through the Christian wars or "a ivalu ni Lotu". This was spearheaded by Cakobau, Tui Nayau of Lakeba and other chiefs in different parts of eastern and northeastern Fiji. Christianity was regarded as "a Lotu iRatu Seru Cakobau" or Ratu Seru Cakobau's religion because it was extended to other vanua either through chiefly alliances or through wars which he waged. The

¹²¹ Even conservative Fijian political parties like the FIP and the Fijian Nationalist Party, although they reject European and colonial encroachment on their customs and culture, nevertheless accept Christianity as their new religion.

extension of the old Fijian Matanitu of Kubuna, Burebasaga and Tovata to include other vanua outside of their geo-political boundaries was socially constructed after the Christian wars. Much of the claim for the inclusion of western Fiji and other parts of Fiji in one of the three traditional matanitu in the east and northeast was based on conquests through Christian wars.¹²² This, as already mentioned, is still contested ground.

The third ideological foundation of the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy was based on the Matanitu or modern government, introduced through British colonization. Fijian understanding of the new form of government was through the Matanitu iTaukei. During the period of colonization, obedience to the Matanitu implied allegiance to the colonial state and the British monarchy. Obedience and loyalty to the British Monarchy was often expressed to the Governor through the meetings of the Native Council (later Council of Chiefs). During the Council of Chiefs Meeting in Suva in November, 1930, one such expression of loyalty was in the form of a letter to the King which was presented by the chiefs to the Governor.

Ratu Popi Seniloli ...presented to His Excellency the letter of loyalty to His Majesty the King and asked that it be transmitted through the proper channel to His Majesty. His Excellency replied that he would have much pleasure in forwarding it for submission to His Majesty.¹²³

The exchange of expressions of loyalty between the British monarchy, through his representative, the Governor, and the Council of Chiefs, reinforced the symbiotic relationship which had developed between the colonial administrators and the eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs, whose status was consolidated through their employment in the system of indirect rule. The Council of Chiefs was important to the Governor, for through Patron-Client politics they held the key to the pacification of the Fijian people. This was expressed by the Governor during the November 1930 meeting of the Council of Chiefs when he explained:

¹²² See also Baleiwaqa, T. 2003: 27-28 on how Ba was carved up between Burebasaga and Kubuna through the Christian wars.

¹²³ Legislative Council of Fiji, Council Paper No. 3. 1931. *Report of Proceedings of Council of Chiefs*, Suva, 1930. Ref. No. Legislative Council Journal 1831. National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 6.

In January and February I visited certain of the Lau and Lomaiviti Islands, Vanua Levu and Taveuni, and during the last month I have traversed Ovalau and the Provinces of Ra, Ba, Lautoka and Yasawa, Nadi and the island of Rotuma. It has been a source of much gratification to me to meet so loyal and so courteous a people and I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the generous welcome which I have received in all parts of the Colony. The keen interest displayed in the administration of your affairs by all of you with whom I have come into contact has shown me that I may with confidence rely upon a full measure of that support and co-operation which you have accorded to my predecessors.¹²⁴

Between 1874 and 1959 the sanctity of the Matanitu was maintained by mostly eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs who were employed in the Matanitu iTaukei. From there on the political thinking which had evolved amongst such chiefs was one of ownership of the socially constructed Fijian ethos since the missionaries' arrival in 1835 and later, secured by the colonizers in 1874. Fijian political ideology as represented by the Matanitu iTaukei was a blend of the political thinking behind the trinity of Vanua, Lotu and Matanitu. Control of this ideology by the eastern and northeastern Fijian hegemony made it difficult for chiefs and people of other vanua who did not subscribe to the same ideology to express any form of dissent, given that the ideology was grounded on three powerful sources, Christianity, the state and the vanua in its Bauan conceptualisation. On the whole, the complex nature of Fijian society was being reduced to the colonial myth of homogeneity which assumed that there was only one single cultural reality with hierarchical chiefly rule throughout Fiji.¹²⁵

Respect for the Vanua, Lotu and Matanitu was a social construction which over time became sacrosanct within Fijian society. The ideology of the Vanua, Lotu and Matanitu became a common rallying point for indigenous Fijians. This glossed over the multiple customary practices and linguistic differences which prevail throughout Fiji. Since the establishment of the colonial state, Fijians have been constantly reminded by their leaders about the importance of maintaining the sanctity of Vanua, Lotu and Matanitu. Actions which defied and threatened the existence of this socially constructed ideology were often

¹²⁴ Legislative Council of Fiji, Council Paper No. 3, 1931. *Report of Proceedings of Council of Chiefs*, Suva, 1930. Reference No. Legislative Council Journal 1831, National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 1.

¹²⁵ See also Routledge, D. 1985: 220 – 221.

abhorred. This has resulted in the suppression of various forms of dissent by chiefs employed in the Matanitu iTaukei since 1874.¹²⁶ In this context the Matanitu iTaukei was created more for social control. Brewster, Commissioner for the provinces of Colo North and Colo East and also Deputy Commissioner for the Armed Native Constabulary in the first half of the twentieth century admitted that Fijians were indeed overruled by the Matanitu iTaukei regulations when he stated that:

There were plenty of Native Regulations against insubordination, disobedience and any sort of disturbance. In fact, it may be said that the Fijians were tied hand and foot by all sorts of enactments.¹²⁷

Governor Jackson equally supported this point of view when he stated that the Matanitu iTaukei involved the governing of the natives under collaborator chiefs for their own benefit.¹²⁸ The power of the Matanitu iTaukei therefore cannot be underestimated in terms of its influence on Fijian political thinking in general. While on one hand it strengthened the power of the eastern and northeastern chiefly elites, on the other it created resentment and dissent amongst those who were marginalized.

Conclusion

Fijian political history from 1874 to 1959 continued the undercurrent of traditional ways of politicking manifested in alliances, rivalry and dissent. The formation of the Matanitu iTaukei exacerbated rivalries and dissent by rearranging Fijian society and giving new meanings to old customary practices. Some chiefs and people in some vanua resisted and defied the imposition of newly created regulations in their vanua and lives as a result. Additionally, they resisted the promotion of some chiefs in the Matanitu iTaukei and the extension of their power through new regulations.

Another manifestation of rivalry and dissent involved the continuation of pre-colonial power contest. Chiefs who emerged powerful in the early years of colonization, such as Madraiwiwi, took advantage of new opportunities and exploited them for their personal advancement. The rise of Madraiwiwi

¹²⁶ See chapter three on Political Dissent during the colonial period.

¹²⁷ Brewster, A.B. 1922. *The Hill Tribes of Fiji*. Seeley, Service & Co. Ltd., London: 230.

¹²⁸ See France, 1969: 151.

weaves in the narrative of the rise of Bau and eventually that of Lau and sub-narratives of internal rivalries amongst chiefly lines and families. The political dominance of Bau began with the rule of powerful chiefs like Nailatikau (mid-1700s); Banuve (late 1700s); Naulivou (early 1800s); Tanoa (early 1800s to mid-1800s); and Cakobau (mid-1800s – 1882).¹²⁹ Apart from the ongoing chieftom rivalry such as that between Bau and Verata, internally within Bau rivalries occurred amongst chiefly families for overall political control. A chief's fate in such situations depended on a number of crucial factors such as his rating amongst his people in terms of leadership skills and ability to look after his people; the extent of his kinship relations and the ability to maintain good rapport with his people; marriage alliances as well as other political alliances.¹³⁰ Madraiwiwi's rise to prominence through the Matanitu iTaukei demonstrated his ability to blend modern opportunities with his chiefly privileges.

In eastern Fiji, the narrative about Madraiwiwi highlights an ongoing traditional rivalry between the two chiefly lines of the Vunivalu and the Roko Tui Bau. Leadership in Bau shifted from the Roko Tui Bau clan to the Vunivalu clan in the early 1800s. Subtle forms of rivalries remained and continued from there on. Ratu Mara Kapaiwai of the Roko Tui Bau clan, father of Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, was Ratu Seru Cakobau's formidable rival. His execution by Cakobau prior to Fiji's cession to Great Britain was a victory to the Vunivalu clan by eradicating competition from a political foe and maintaining political dominance in eastern and northeastern Fiji. However, colonization reversed the tide as Madraiwiwi saw an opportunity to re-establish the past glory of the Roko Tui Bau line through his career in the Matanitu iTaukei.

Through Madraiwiwi and politics through the vasu system, others in the kinship system benefited. The political dominance of Lau throughout the twentieth century began with Madraiwiwi and continued by his son Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna. Continuing the legacy, Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna prepared his nephew, Ratu Mara.¹³¹ This thesis argues that by the late nineteenth century,

¹²⁹ See Derrick, 1946: 54-55.

¹³⁰ For an understanding of the power of Bau in pre-colonial Fiji, See also Scarr, D. 1980. *Ratu Sukuna: Soldier, Statesman, Man of Two Worlds*. Macmillan Education Ltd., London: 3.

¹³¹ See Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese. 1997. *The Pacific Way: A Memoir*. University of Hawaii: 26.

the rise and decline of powerful chiefdoms in eastern and northeastern Fiji continued with the decline of Bau and Kubuna and the rise of Lau and Tovata through Madraiwiwi. Sukuna and Mara. Their leadership spanned the whole of the twentieth century until Mara's passing in 2004.

The Matanitu iTaukei created a political niche through which the eastern and northeastern Fijian hegemony achieved and consolidated their dominant role in the Fijian political discourse. The roles which were assumed by Fijian chiefly leaders like Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Ratu Sir George Cakobau, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau and Ratu Sir Edward Cakobau were facilitated and enhanced by the Matanitu iTaukei. As Fiji moved towards independence, these chiefs were involved in the negotiations for an independent constitution as well as assume new leadership roles. Ratu Mara, high chief of Lau and Tovata, emerged as the most suitable candidate among the eastern and northeastern chiefs. This was later to be a source of subtle animosity amongst his contemporaries from the Kubuna Confederacy. For in eastern and northeastern Fijian political thinking, Mara's rise to prominence indirectly distorted the political pecking order and concurrently marginalized the traditional role of Kubuna and its chiefly contenders in the competition for modern leadership.

Overall, between 1874 and 1959 the process of pacification was not easy as Fijians continued to defy the power of the colonial state through chiefs in the Matanitu iTaukei. While some dissent were rooted in the pre-colonial period, others, although rooted in pre-contact Fiji, were invoked by the ambitious nature of chiefs in the system of indirect rule. By 1959, with the Oil Workers Strike in Suva, the manifestation of rivalry and dissent had taken a new twist and a new form with the involvement of the trade unions as a forum for expressing dissent. The introduction of party politics provided a new avenue for expressing rivalry and dissent.

PART III – PHASES OF POLITICAL CHALLENGE AND DISSENT

(1960 - 1999)

CHAPTER FOUR

PIONEERING FIJIAN POLITICAL PARTIES: THE FIRST PHASE OF POLITICAL CHALLENGE (1960 – 1972)

The period between 1960 and 1972 was a most significant one in Fiji's and Fijian contemporary political history due to a number of crucial developments in the transition from colonial rule to independence. With a colonial backdrop of divide and rule accompanied by indirect rule, Fiji citizens were to be prepared for a new constitutional arrangement with a new system of political representation. It was a period of reckoning as political leaders continued the debate on the new constitutional arrangements, within Fijian society. There were talk of a new future outside the authoritarian influence of the Fijian Administration where political leadership was the monopoly of a few chiefs and educated commoners. Fiji's long dormant political opinions on all sides of the political divide were to be tested at this crucial period.

Party politics in the 1960s continued to operate within the colonial system of political representation through membership of the Executive and Legislative Councils, although election to the Legislative Council for Fijians was introduced for the first time in 1963. Membership of the Legislative Council was still maintained along ethnic lines according to the major groups namely Fijian, Indian and European. This chapter also discusses political arrangements for the negotiation of an independence constitution and the role of the eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefly elites in negotiating Fijian rights. The negotiation of these rights and its outcome was partially responsible for the emergence of Fijian nationalism through party politics.

Within Fijian society the transition from the Matanitu iTaukei to the "Soqosoqo iTaukei" or Fijian Association on 18 February, 1956 and thereafter, the formation of the Alliance Party in 1966, marked the continued dominance of

eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs in mainstream Fijian politics. However, party politics provided an avenue for challenging the old order through its eastern and northeastern chiefly elite manifestation. Within Fijian society, alternatives to the Fijian Association emerged in the 1960s with the formation of Apisai Tora's Western Democratic Party, Isikeli Nadalo's Fijian National Party and Apimeleki Ramatau's Fiji Bula Tale Communist Party¹, all of which were western Viti Levu-based parties. In the 1963 Legislative Council election, at least three Fijian political groups participated and these were the "iSoqosoqo iTaukei" or Fijian Association, the Western Democratic Party and the Fijian National Party. The Indo-Fijian based Federation Party was also formed in 1963 by A.D. Patel and following this was the formation of Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's Alliance Party in 1966. By 1968, the National Democratic Party, a coalition between Tora's and Nadalo's party, had joined forces with A. D. Patel's Federation Party, giving the party the name "National Federation Party". In 1969 the first breakaway from the Fijian Association occurred with the formation of Viliame Savu's Fiji Independent Party (FIP).

New Constitutional Arrangements and Fijian Paramountcy

The demand for electoral reform by the Kisan Sangh on February 14, 1956 was a catalyst for the formation of the Fijian Association, which was formed four days after the demand was made, on February 18, 1956.² To counter this demand, a statement issued by the Fijian Association declared that Fijians resisted the threat to introduce changes through unconstitutional means. Additionally the chiefs reiterated that any changes which were not supported by Fijians were going to be opposed.³ It appeared that the eastern and northeastern chiefly elites were rather complacent in their comfortable niche created and maintained in the Matanitu iTaukei for over eighty years of colonial

¹ The Bula Tale Communist Party did not compete in the Legislative Council election in 1963.

² The Fijian Association was led by Ratu Edward Cakobau, Uraia K. Koroi, Inosi R. Vatucicila, N. Mocolutu, I. I. Lesuma, Semesa Sikivou and Ratu Kamisese Mara as Chairman. See also Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese, 1997. *The Pacific Way: A Memoir*. University of Hawaii: 63.

³ Ayodhya Prasad and Nat Chalmers, through a new cane farmer's union, the Kisan Sangh had threatened a general strike if there was no electoral reform. An early response to this demand by the Fijian chiefly elites was the immediate formation of the Fijian Association. See also Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese, 1997: 63.

rule. The urgent demand for change from Chalmers and Prasad took them by surprise.⁴ Mara affirmed this argument when he stated that:

It was all rather bitter, but the formation of the Fijian Association as a focus for Fijian political expression was an important step for which we may thank Mr. Chalmers – or at least for its establishment sooner than otherwise might have happened.⁵

The Association's main objectives when it was formed were: maintaining the existing hierarchy of chiefly authority, preserving Fiji's link with the British Crown, maintaining the system of Fijian land ownership and ensuring Fijian involvement in any discussion with the British Crown for constitutional change. Meanwhile, between 1956 and the early 1960s the FA was not active in pursuing its own course on the future of Fijians in the new system of political representation but engaged in the debate through a defensive strategy of resisting Indo-Fijian demands.⁶ Alley argues that the Fijian Association:

acted as something of a watchdog over local Indian political aspirations, doing little to encourage the activity in its own community.⁷

Educated commoner Fijians like Rusiate Nayacakalou argued that the objective of the Fijian Association was to preserve and maintain the status quo. This was reflected in Ratu Mara's opposition to the Membership system which was first debated in the 1961 sitting of the Legislative Council. The proposal for a membership system was presented in the Legislative Council by the Acting Colonial Secretary, who stated that the government was not seeking approval for the introduction of a membership system but simply canvassing views on a broad front. The implication of the inevitability of a membership system was clearly implied in this statement. Ratu Mara, in opposing the motion, argued that since the motion implied an acceleration towards independence, then he believed that the move was premature.

⁴ See also Ali, A. 1973. "The Fiji General Election of 1972" in *The Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 8. Oxford University Press: 173.

⁵ Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese, 1997: 64.

⁶ See also Ali, A. 1973: 174-175.

⁷ Alley, R. 1986: 31.

He argued that:

We had just had the report of the Burns Commission. Surely we should first concentrate on its recommendations and get a stable economy, before thinking of constitutional change... The constitutional development of the colony had been laid down by the Fijian chiefs who ceded the islands. The Council of Chiefs had decided that Her Majesty's title should be *Radi ni Viti kei Peritania*, Queen of Fiji and Great Britain. That was the direction I put forward for any constitutional development.⁸

By 1963 when Britain accelerated its move towards constitutional development, another educated commoner member of the Legislative Council, Ravuama Vunivalu, reiterated Nayacakalou's earlier comment by highlighting the ineptitude of the organization in terms of caring for ordinary Fijians, in a 1963 Legislative Council session.⁹

This show of indifference and laxity by the Fijian Association changed in 1963 with mounting pressure for independence from Britain, resulting in the visit of Nigel Fisher, the Under Secretary of States for the Colonies. Amongst the proposals emphasized at this time were the need to create multi-racial political parties as well as the convening of a constitutional conference in 1965. Members of the Fijian ruling elite took immediate measures to answer these demands. Prior to the departure of Fisher, a meeting was convened on the island of Wakaya on 17 January, 1963 in which a letter which was written by the Fijian members of Legislative Council and their European advisors was signed and handed to Fisher. Those who signed were Ratu George Cakobau, Ratu Penaia Ganilau, Ratu Kamisese Mara, Semesa Sikivou, Ravuama Vunivalu, A. C. Reid, F. N. Falvey and R. M. Major.¹⁰

The representations outlined in the Wakaya Letter emphasized the importance of the act of cession to the Fijian people and a re-emphasis on Mara's earlier proposal in 1961 that Her Majesty the Queen, was considered by the Fijians as "*Ranadi ni Viti kei Peritania*" (Queen of Fiji and England) and considered this to constitute Fiji's special link to the Crown. In this context Fijians considered that the severance of the link with the Crown would never be contemplated.

⁸ Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese, 1997: 67.

⁹ See also Alley, R. 1986: 30-31.

¹⁰ See Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese, 1997: 233-234.

Additionally, the letter proposed a new constitutional instrument which would embody the special relationship with the Crown, safeguard Fijian interests and strengthen the terms of the Deed of cession as well as the spirit in which it was made. Fijians also wanted security in the ownership of native land through the Native Land Trust Board and changes to laws regarding land must never be made without the consent of the Council of Chiefs. It was also proposed that Fiji should be a Christian state, following the desire of those who ceded Fiji as stated in the preamble of the Deed of Cession. All legislation affecting Fijian rights and interests should be referred to the Fijian Affairs Board or on the recommendations of the Board to the Council of Chiefs. The Governor's directions through the Public Service Commission to work towards racial parity in the Civil Service should be retained. The letter concluded that upon satisfactory solution to the issues raised, the group would be prepared to work with the other major races in preparing Fiji for self-government and also that any initiatives for constitutional changes must come from Fijians.¹¹

Within Fijian society, those who were closely following the path to decolonisation viewed the Wakaya letter as nothing more than a proposal to secure the future of the eastern and northeastern chiefly elites who dominated Fijian membership in the Legislative Council, Fijian Affairs Board, Native Land Trust Board and the Council of Chiefs. The same group of chiefs were members of these institutions and proposals in the letter revolved around the protection of their interests.¹² Savu¹³ argued that the Wakaya letter presented Fijians with a very compromised position in the negotiations for independence during the 1965 Constitutional conference in London. This was reflected in the equalization in the number of parliamentary seats between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians. From the Fijian perspective, non-Fijians had more seats than indigenous Fijians. When Ratu Mara was interviewed by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), after the London Conference, he declared that

¹¹ See Mara, Ratu Sir Kamises, 1997: 233-234. See also Howard, M. C. 1991: 60-61.

¹² See also Howard, M. C. 1991: 60-61.

¹³ Viliame Savu was a founder and member of the Fijian Chamber of Commerce (FCC) in the 1960s. He later became the President of the Fiji Independent Party (FIP) between 1969 and 1975. Savu joined Sakeasi Butadroka's Fijian Nationalist Party from 1975 onwards. In my interview with him, Savu argued that Fijians must never join multiracial parties if they want to remain dominant in their native land.

indigenous Fijians had won in the pre-independence constitutional negotiations. Savu argued that Mara should have declared:

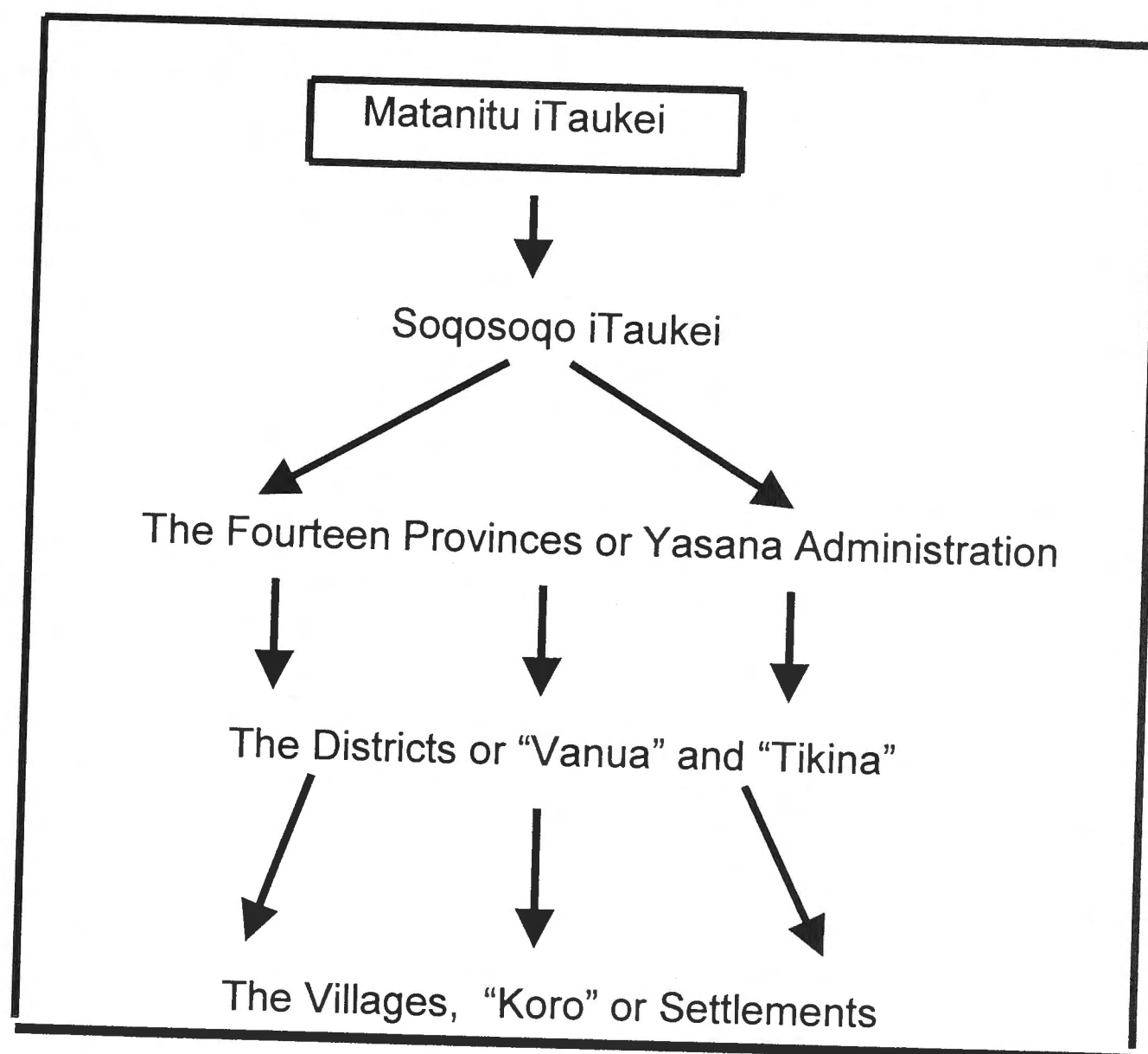
Au sa qai volitaki keda kece na iTaukei ena bose oqo. Sa noda na druka¹⁴.

(I have just sold all indigenous Fijians in this meeting. We have been defeated).

The version of Fijian paramountcy which emerged in the pre-constitutional negotiations, as already explained, appeared problematic to a number of indigenous Fijians. Some interpreted it as biased in terms of protecting the Fijian chiefly elite interests first and foremost while others believed that it compromised indigenous Fijian rights and interests. Added to this was sense of dissatisfaction as other chiefs and ordinary Fijians in the many diverse groups throughout Fiji were not consulted for their views. An immediate outcome of this was that with the introduction of election in 1966 and the membership system in July 1964, alternative Fijian political parties were formed in western Viti Levu. These were Apisai Tora's Western Democratic Party, Isikeli Nadalo's Fijian National Party and Apimeleki's Ramatau's Bula Tale Communist Party.¹⁵ Together with the Fijian Association, the Western Democratic Party and the Fijian National Party competed in the 1963 Legislative Council election. The Fijian Association used the vast network in the Fijian Administration to secure its power base. Patron client politics inevitably emerged as a dominant feature of such a political arrangement. The figure below shows the structure of patron-client politics from the Matanitu iTaukei (Fijian Administration) to the Soqosoqo iTaukei (Fijian Association).

¹⁴ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

Figure 10: The Patron-Client Network: from Matanitu iTaukei to the Soqosoqo iTaukei



In the Fijian version of patron-client politics, the party as a modern institution for democratic representation was being propelled by traditional loyalties in their authentic and re-created forms. Authentic loyalties involved the use of culture through the kinship system and the vanua and matanitu network to solicit political support. Re-created forms of loyalties involved the social construction of realities under the Matanitu I Taukei through the ideology of Vanua, Lotu and Matanitu and their monopoly for political support.

When the FA or Soqosoqo iTaukei became the Fijian arm of the Alliance Party in 1966, the party did not only inherit a strategic and privileged position within Fijian society but equally inherited its underlying weaknesses and long-term contradictions. This inheritance was confronted with the challenges posed by alternative Fijian political parties which were formed in different regions of Fiji.

¹⁵ See Howard M. C. 1991: 60-61.

The Western Fijian Egalitarian Orthodoxy And Western-Based Political Parties: Continuing a Tradition of Dissent

Apart from linguistic and dialectal differences, the various vanua in western Viti Levu are culturally different from those in the east and northeast parts of the Fiji group. Long periods of isolation may have accounted for this. These vanua, more so those in the centre of the island, remained isolated until the advance of the missionaries and later colonial administration after 1874. Socio-political structures in western Viti Levu are more egalitarian than those found in eastern and north-eastern Fiji. There are no distinct hierarchies, nor rigid customs which separate chiefs from people.¹⁶ As already mentioned in chapter three, chiefs are regarded as "first amongst equals". Norton explains:

Western society was in general less rigidly hierarchical and commoners could sometimes achieve influence and prestige comparable to those of hereditary chiefs. In Colo west, most now part of the provinces of Nadroga/Navosa, the Land Claims Commission was struck by the absence of 'chiefly customs'.¹⁷

The egalitarian socio-political structure in western Fiji gives rise to the independent political thinking upon which the western Fijian egalitarian orthodoxy is founded.¹⁸ Each Vanua in western Fiji exists on an independent basis from those found in the east and northeastern parts of the Fiji group. The socio-political philosophy which is adopted here is similar to that found on the various vanua on the southern island of Kadavu, referred to in that dialect as "Manu Duitagi". In Fijian-Kadavu idiom it implies that each chief is supreme only in his or her vanua and his or her authority recognized only by his or her people. Likewise, the authority of each chief in Kadavu, like in western Viti Levu, is recognized only by his or her people. While chiefs recognize and respect each other, this is done on the basis of the "first amongst equals" philosophy of the "yasayasa vaka-Ra" or western Viti Levu.¹⁹

¹⁶ Interview with Ratu Inosi Kuridrani, October 2, 2002. Namatakula village, Nadroga/Navosa..

¹⁷ Norton, R. 1990: 63.

¹⁸ The western Fijian egalitarian orthodoxy is a traditional belief system which promotes equality reflecting the non-hierarchical nature of western Fijian society.

¹⁹ Interview with Tabulutu, P. (originally of Kadavu, Fiji). January 19, 2004. Canberra, Australia.

Tora states that:

In the province of Ba there are twenty-one vanua and twenty-one chiefs of equal rank. There is no overall chief amongst the twenty one. Each of these vanua chiefs is a chief in his own right, in his own territory and in his own perfection. We belong neither to Kubuna nor Burebasaga...we are independent...The need for unity is difficult but we get on. If one of the chiefs decides to pull out of the unity, there is no power to force him to return, he will be left on his own until he feels like returning.²⁰

The matanitu as a political construct which united a number of vanua into a loose form of a traditional state never existed in western Viti Levu and there was also an absence of a paramount chief or head as all chiefs are equal in rank.²¹ The egalitarian nature of western Fijian society explains why people of different vanua cannot easily impose their ideas or beliefs on people in other vanua. Ratu Inosi Kuridrani, a chief of the Yavusa Vusu in Navosa, indicated that generally in western Viti Levu one would only recognize the presence of a chief in a ceremony when the chief drinks the first bowl of "yaqona" or "kava".²² This implies that chiefs in western Viti Levu are one with the people and are not treated as "mini-gods" like many chiefs in eastern and north-eastern Fiji.

The emergence of the first Fijian political parties in western Viti Levu is a reflection of the egalitarian socio-political structure of western Fijian society. It was the expression of an independent thinking which can be traced back to dissenting figures like Dugumoi or "Navosavakadua" of Ra and Nawai of Nadi. In many ways Apisai Tora and Isikeli Nadalo, two veteran western Fijian politicians, followed in the footsteps of earlier western Fijian political dissidents. Both Tora and Nadalo contested the first Legislative Council election in 1963 as well as those in 1966. From there on they competed in other elections, through the National Federation Party and also through the Alliance Party, All National Congress and Party of National Unity. Both were unionists in the colonial period and this also influenced their involvement in party politics.

²⁰ Interview with Senator Apisai Tora. June 5, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba.

²¹ See also Derrick, R. A. 1946: 9.

²² Interview with Ratu Inosi Kuridrani. October 2, 2002. Namatakula village, Nadroga/Navosa.

The formation of the Fiji Independent Party in 1969 extended the dissenting tradition in Fijian party politics. The FIP as an eastern-based party was anti-colonial and chiefly establishment. Over time, the FIP regarded the presence of non-Fijians in Fiji as contributing to Fijian marginalisation.²³ The Fijian Chamber of Commerce, out of which the FIP was formed in 1969, understood the symbiotic relationship between the colonial administrators and eastern and northeastern chiefs in the Matanitu iTaukei. Savu explained that it was difficult for indigenous Fijians to establish businesses since chiefs in the Matanitu iTaukei expected them to remain in villages under native regulations. A meeting organized by the Fijian Chamber of Commerce in Lautoka was opened by A.D.Patel, leader of the National Federation Party, when Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, who was originally invited, declined the invitation at the last minute. Savu explained that the gesture indicated the non-caring attitude of the chiefly elites for ordinary Fijians' desire for economic advancement.²⁴

Case Study of a Pioneer Western Fijian Political Party: Apisai Tora's Western Democratic Party

Apisai Tora was the son of a traditional clan leader and policeman from Natalau in Sabeto, and a Fijian lady from the province of Ra. His long term political involvement in Fiji, from the 1950s to the present, can be understood in two ways. First, through his socio-political background as a western Fijian, and second through his education and life experiences. Tora, a western Fijian or "kai Yasayasa vaka-Ra", from Natalau Sabeto, was born in the 1930s. He attended the Sabeto District School in Nadi and moved to the Provincial School Southern in Sawani in 1946. In 1947 he passed the exams at the Provincial School Southern for entry to the prestigious Queen Victoria School, then located at Nanukuloa in the province of Ra. He spent one year, 1948, at the Queen Victoria School in Nanukuloa when the school was relocated to the present site of Ratu Kadavulevu School in Lodonu, then the Provincial School Eastern, in northern Tailevu.²⁵ Tora finished his secondary education at the Queen Victoria School in 1953 before joining the Fiji Military Forces on his

²³ In my interview with Viliame Savu, the FIP was more concerned with political marginalisation since he stated that the "vulagi" or visitors were welcomed to continue with their businesses. However, political control was to be left to Fijians only. Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2004, Suva, Fiji.

²⁴ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

²⁵ Ratu Kadavulevu School and Queen Victoria School are two government high schools which were established specifically for the education of Fijian boys. Queen Victoria School was initially established for sons of chiefs only. It later admitted sons of commoner Fijians as well.

eighteenth birthday on January 5, 1952. He was in the military forces when he was recruited for the Malayan Campaign from 1954 to 1956, returning to Fiji after serving three years in Malaya.

In 1957 he joined Fiji's Civil Service after being demobilized and served under Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara when he was the District Officer in Ba. When Ratu Mara left the service for the University of London in 1958, Tora worked under Mara's successor who was a former European Deputy Commissioner of Police. Tora's first direct defiance of colonial rule was his refusal to mix "yaqona" or kava for the European District Officer in Ba, under whom he served in 1958. Tora explained that when the European District Officer ordered him one day to mix his "yaqona", he replied:

General Orders does not say anything about civil servants mixing yaqona. That's why I got the 'boot' and I joined the Trade Union movement in 1958.²⁶

Prior to the formation of his western Democratic Party, Tora was an active union member and together with James Anthony, the Secretary of the Wholesale and General Worker's Union, organised the Oil Workers strike which started on December 7, 1959.²⁷ Tora's experience in the Union in colonial Fiji exacerbated the feeling of marginalisation he felt as a western Fijian. The 1959 Oil workers strike is perhaps still the most violent trade union strike in the history of Fiji's trade union movement. Tora explained that he joined the trade union movement much earlier than party politics which later opened up an avenue for challenging the status quo. During my interview with Tora, he spoke proudly about the infamous Oil Workers strike of which he and Dr James Anthony²⁸ were the organizers.²⁹

Exploitation of workers in the oil industry was taken lightly by employers who assumed that the workers had little or no understanding of the disparity in

²⁶ Interview with Apisai Tora. June 5, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province.

²⁷ See *The Fiji Times*, December 8, 1959. "Many Oil Industry Workers on Strike", *Fiji Times Ltd.*, Suva, Fiji: 1; See *The Fiji Times*, December 10, 1959. "Riot Squad in Troubled Suva: Violence Flares on Third Day of Strike", *Fiji Times Ltd.*, Suva, Fiji: 1.

²⁸ Dr. James Anthony who was then Secretary for the Wholesale and Retail Workers General Union, now lives in Honolulu, Hawaii.

²⁹ Interview with Senator Apisai Tora, June 5, 2002. Natalau Village, Sabeto, Ba Province.

wages between oil workers in Fiji and those of their Australian counterparts. However, the executive of the Wholesale and Retail Workers General Union, a union of about a thousand members, including three hundred oil company workers, understood that the Australian multi-national oil companies of Shell and Vacuum Oil paid Australian workers much higher rates. A strike was decided upon when the wage increase offered by the Shell and Vacuum Oil was considered by the workers as grossly insufficient.³⁰ Three days after the strike, *The Fiji Times* headline reported that:

Violence broke out on the third day of the oil workers strike at Suva yesterday. The police threw smoke bombs and made several charges at crowds which had congregated during the afternoon to hear the secretary of the Wholesale and Retail Workers General union (Mr. James Anthony) speak. Men in the crowd retaliated by hurling stones and rocks at the police squads. The disturbances were the worst in Suva's 77 year history as the capital of Fiji.³¹

As mentioned in chapter three, the strike was quelled through an appeal to Fijian strikers by the ruling chiefly elites. This political strategy of appealing to ethnicity was a strategy used by the chiefly elite in the Matanitu iTaukei to pacify indigenous Fijians and to safeguard European business interest. It justifies the argument that the Fijian Administration was created more as an institution for social control. The Fijian custom of "vakarokoroko" (respect) and "vakarorogo" (obedience) was manipulated by chiefly elites in the Legislative Council and Matanitu iTaukei and colonial administrators to promote colonial capitalism in Fiji.³² Such was the general political background from which Tora launched his Fijian Democratic Party in 1960 and contested the first Legislative Council

³⁰ See also Hampenstall, P. and Rutherford, N. 1984: 75.

³¹ *The Fiji Times*, December 10, 1959. "Riot Squad in Troubled Suva: Violence Flares on Third Day of Strike", Fiji Times Ltd., Suva, Fiji: 1.

³² Within Fijian society, the custom of "vakarokoroko" and "vakarorogo" were culture specific and integrated with the practice of reciprocity. Fijians practiced them within the confines of their socio-political groupings and boundaries. They listened to and respected their chiefs and traditional leaders and offered them services and in return their chiefs and leaders offered them the same, in terms of provisions of food, shelter, and other basic necessities if needed. Through colonization and the introduction of modern economic relations, such customs were extrapolated, abused and manipulated to enable the success of foreign owned businesses. Fijians were expected to maintain the customs of vakarokoroko and vakarorogo under new socio-political and economic conditions, even if they were paid low wages as seen in the circumstances surrounding the 1959 oil workers strike and gold mine strikes.

election against Ratu Penaia Ganilau, Ratu William Toganivalu, Peniame Naqasima and Isikeli Nadalo in the western Fijian constituency.³³

In the early days of his political involvement, Tora lived the life of a western Fijian on the periphery of mainstream Fijian politics, which was dominated by eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs. The manifestation of dissent which he expressed was first directed at the British administrators, European business owners and the eastern and northeastern Fijian establishment. His defiance of the colonial administration in Fiji was also partially derived from his belief that western Viti Levu Fijians were victims of both the colonial and eastern and northeastern chiefly establishment socio-political and economic marginalization. This continues an earlier trend of thinking and dissent, expressed through millenarian movements by Navosavakadua and Nawai. Tora's thinking and abhorrence of what capitalism through colonialism did to indigenous societies throughout the world, which he considered as happening in Fiji, was reflected in his memorandum to the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies when he stated that:

While Europe was asserting within its own borders the rights of nationality and self-determination, it was also denying the right of non-European peoples to abstain from using to the full, according to western notions, the potential wealth of their lands and their labour power, and was claiming the right to enforce the development of any territory inhabited by less civilized peoples, as part of the civilizing mission of the white races.³⁴

Against this backdrop, over time, he considered the long-term presence of Indo-Fijians as problematic to his future vision of Fijian society. Repatriation of Indians, as seen in a memorandum which he sent to the Under-Secretary of State for the colonies, was his solution for this.³⁵ By 1965, the ideology of the Fijian Democratic Party could be gauged from the contents of a memorandum sent to the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies by the leader of the party,

³³ Interview with Senator Apisai Tora, June 5, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province. See also *Fiji Royal Gazette*, 1963: 173.

³⁴ Memorandum to Trafford-Smith, ESQ., Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. From The Fijian Democratic Party. Subject: The Political Situation in Fiji. March 30, 1965. Reference No. C01036/1552: 3.

³⁵ See Memorandum to Trafford-Smith, C.M.G., ESQ., Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. From The Fijian Democratic Party. Subject: The Political Situation in Fiji. March 30, 1965. Reference No. C01036/1552: 1-17.

Tora. Prior to this in the early 1960s, in their joint submission for an Independent Constitution for Fiji, Tora together with Maleli Raibe, a member of the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party of Ba, praised the progress made by Indo-Fijians but proposed that their presence in Fiji should be temporary only in lieu of future demand for land and political control. Both believed in the compensation and gradual repatriation of Indo-Fijians.³⁶ Tora, by the early 1960s, realized the plight of indigenous Fijians under the system of indirect rule and their non-direct involvement in state organized economic activities like cane farming, and pointed out what he considered a contradiction in colonial economic policy. Additionally, in his memorandum, Tora's main concern was how "Her Majesty's Government" (HGM) was to maintain "the paramountcy of Fijian interests" in light of the increasing Indo-Fijian population.³⁷ Tora considered that by introducing indentured labourers, and not having any plans for their repatriation, the British government was concurrently undermining the paramountcy of Fijian interest in the Deed of Cession Charter.³⁸ He states that:

The political and the demographic clearly invalidate any grounds for the presence of any large non-Fijian community whose size may in time act to reduce the supremacy of that (Fijian) interest. The implication is quite clear. In the event of Her Majesty's Government restoring political power to Fiji such power must be restored whole and undivided to the Fijian people alone.³⁹

The call for the restoration of political power to indigenous Fijians only was later re-echoed by the Fiji Independent Party and the Fijian Nationalist Party. Tora's predisposition as a western Fijian and his overall political ambition make him the most outstanding strategist in Fijian politics from the 1960s onwards. This was realized in the way he formed political parties or joined other political parties across the east and west divide.

³⁶ Summary of Submissions, CO 1036/1554 98193, Public Records Office: 14.

³⁷ See also Lal, B.V. 1992: 60-65.

³⁸ The notion of Fijian paramountcy is important in the study of contemporary Fijian political history. It had different meanings to different socio-political groups. The eastern and northeastern chiefly elites echoed sentiments about Fijian paramountcy in terms of the maintenance of a socio-political hierarchy which guaranteed their rights and paramountcy first and foremost. Western Fijians like Tora also echoed Fijian paramountcy perhaps, in its form which reflected the egalitarian nature of western Viti Levu political thinking. Fijian paramountcy, however, did not have an overall accepted structure amongst the diverse Fijian social groups.

³⁹ Memorandum to Trafford-Smith., ESQ., Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, From The Fijian Democratic Party. Subject: The Political Situation in Fiji. March 30, 1965. Reference No. C01036/1552: 3.

Tora's party joined forces with Isikeli Nadalo's Fijian National Party in 1966 after a meeting in Lomawai village in the province of Nadroga. At this time the leaders of the two western Fijian political parties realized that a merger would have made their party more formidable. The amalgamated party became known as the National Democratic Party, contesting the 1966 Legislative Council election under the new name.⁴⁰

At this stage, Tora seriously considered that the only way forward for Fiji was through the formation of multiracial political parties. After the 1966 election, a further amalgamation with the Indo-Fijian dominated Federation Party was the next strategy. Tora states:

We thought we might do better by becoming multi-racial...In 1968 we joined the Federation Party and became multi-racial then. So the word "National" in the NFP comes from us, "National" from the Fijian parties. Joined together with the "Federation Party to become the "National Federation Party" from 1968 until now.⁴¹

Both Tora and Nadalo successfully contested the 1972 general election on National Federation Party ticket. Although Tora had contributed directly to the first serious challenge of toppling the Alliance Party in the build up to the April 1977 general election, his political style had some "Machiavellian flavour" in terms of adopting political strategies which enabled his long-term political survival. First, he carefully utilized the western Viti Levu versus eastern Viti Levu dichotomy to build his power base through an amalgamation of his political party with Nadalo's Fijian National Party. His attempt was further strengthened through a merger with the Indo-Fijian dominated Federation Party in 1968. Given the egalitarian nature of the various vanua in the west, and the absence of a traditional hierarchy through which he could have imposed his political ideology, defeating eastern and northeastern chiefly politicians on his own was an impossible task. This led to party amalgamations as mentioned earlier. However, unlike Nadalo and Gavidi⁴² who remained outside of the eastern and northeastern political circles throughout their political career, Tora's unfolding

⁴⁰ Interview with Apisai Tora, June 5, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province. See also *The Fiji Times*, 12 October. 1966: 5.

⁴¹ Interview with Apisai Tora, June 5, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province.

⁴² Ratu Osea Gavidi, a chief from the province of Nadroga/Navosa in western Viti Levu, joined party politics in 1977 when he stood as an independent candidate in the general elections. He fought for the rights of indigenous pine landowners in his province after a conflict with the Alliance government of Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara on government policy regarding the development of the pine industry in Fiji. See chapter five for details.

political strategies throughout the thirty-nine years of party politics under study reveal a lot about his ideology and the method he adopted to enable his political survival.

Prior to becoming a member of the Fijian Association in 1978, Tora had consolidated his power base in the west and has always been a Fijian nationalist at heart. His nationalist sentiments were expressed openly against the Europeans and secretly against Indo-Fijian dominance until after 1977. After his defeat in the second general election of 1977, Tora crossed the floor to be a member of the Alliance, the party he used to oppose. This was a total eclipse, perhaps the saying "politics makes strange bed fellows" befitted Tora's political nature. His rather complex political career, straddling between the left and the right and the east and the west, highlighted his long term political ambition.

In the 1982 and 1987 elections, Tora successfully fought the elections on Alliance Party ticket. In 1982 he stood against the Tui Nadi who had joined the NFP/WUF coalition after disagreement with eastern chiefs in the Alliance Party over the allocation of state funds for the repair of houses on Bau island prior to the visit of Queen Elizabeth II. The Tui Nadi said that western children had greater needs such as better schools which should have been a government priority. The Tui Nadi's dissent resonated with that of the Ratu mai Verata as explained in chapter three. In 1987, Tora stood against another fellow westerner Simone Durutalo, who was a member of Dr Timoci Bavadra's Fiji Labour Party. Tora's nationalist sentiments were fully expressed after he became a leading organizer for the Taukei movement's destabilization moves after the Alliance Party defeat. This destabilization culminated in the first Fijian coup on May 14, 1987 when the winning Fiji Labour Party/National Federation Party Coalition was overthrown by Lt. Colonel Rabuka's military coup. On the whole, Tora's role as a "political party maker", spanned the thirty-nine years of this study from 1960 to 1999. His role in the creation of alternative Fijian political parties in western Viti Levu will be discussed further in chapters five to seven.

The 1963 Legislative Council Election

The Legislative Council election of 1963 was an important one in Fijian political history because for the first time, indigenous Fijians were given the right to vote

for some of their representatives in the Legislative Council. The introduction of party politics and election in 1963 provided an opportunity for Fijians to form their own political parties as well as vote for candidates of their choices. These new opportunities not only enabled the formation of alternative political parties in regions such as western Viti Levu but also facilitated the wider involvement of commoners in party politics rather than a few selected chiefs.⁴³ Modern liberal democracy which introduced the party system into Fijian society also facilitated the expression of pre-colonial socio-political diversity amongst indigenous Fijians, leading to the expression of rivalry and dissent through party politics.

Western Fijians who were the pioneer political leaders included Isikeli Nadalo, a farmer and unionist, and Peniame Naqasima, a civil servant. Both were from the province of Nadroga/Navosa. The third, Apisai Tora, was a unionist from the province of Ba.⁴⁴ The two non-western Fijians who contested the Western Constituency seat for a Fijian member for the Legislative Council in the 1963 election were Ratu Penaia Ganilau of Somosomo, Cakaudrove, who was the Deputy Secretary for Fijian Affairs, and Ratu William Toganivalu of Bau, who was a Supervisor.⁴⁵

⁴³ In eastern and north-eastern Fiji, chiefs have dominated party politics in the thirty-nine years of this study. In some instances, there has been a "battle of the chiefs" kind of situation as chiefs contest for modern political power. See also Durutalo, A. 2000. "Elections and the Dilemma of Indigenous Fijian Political Unity", in *Fiji Before the Storm: Elections and the Politics of Development*, in Lal, B.V. (ed). Asia Pacific Press, The Australian National University: 78-80.

⁴⁴ See *Fiji Royal Gazette* 1963, Legislative Council Elections, Returning Officer's Report, 30th day of April 1963 on "The Report of the Returning Officer of the Western Constituency on the Election of a Fijian Member". Ref. No. Fiji Royal Gazette 1963, National Archives of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 173.

⁴⁵ Ibid. *Fiji Royal Gazette* 1963: 173.

The table below shows the votes polled for each candidate in the 1963 Legislative Council Election for the western Fijian constituency.

Table 1: 1963 Legislative Council Election: Western Fijian Constituency

Constituency	Name of Candidate/Province of origin/Political Affiliation	Number of Votes	Percentage of Votes
Western Viti Levu	Ratu Penaia Ganilau (Cakaudrove – Fijian Association)	7,347	66%
	Apisai V. Tora (Ba – Western Democratic Party)	1,496	13%
	Peniame D. Naqasima (Nadroga/Navosa – Fijian Association)	1,434	13%
	Isikeli Nadalo (Nadroga/Navosa – Fijian National Party)	659	6%
	William Toganivalu (Tailevu – Fijian Association)	197	2%
Total Votes Counted		11,133	

(Source: Fiji Royal Gazette 1963: 173)

Even though the three western Fijian candidates were defeated in the 1963 election, the expression of dissent through party politics was a significant milestone. This contradicted the ideology of political unity spearheaded by the eastern and northeastern chiefly hegemony in the Matanitu iTaukei. The formation of alternative political parties in western Viti Levu challenged the paramountcy claim of the eastern and northeastern chiefly establishment. Both Tora and Nadalo, as pioneer political leaders in western Viti Levu, continued the narratives of dissent which were expressed earlier by Navosavakadua and Nawai. The dissenting tradition was further strengthened through contact with Indo-Fijian cane farmers in western Viti Levu. Both groups equally felt the

repressive arm of the colonial government and the Matanitu iTaukei in different ways.

Norton's argument that Tora, even though the most popular of the candidates, still lost the election to Ganilau with sixty six percent of the votes is an understatement of Ganilau's profile as the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs.⁴⁶ Additionally, while Tora's party was small and confined to a region in the west, Ganilau had access to the Fijian Administration by being a member of the Fijian Association, as explained in detail in chapter three. It made a lot of difference when an ordinary eastern Fijian chief, as seen in the case of William Toganivalu, stood for election without the support of the Matanitu iTaukei. In the same election of 1963 the seat for a Fijian member for the Southern Fijian Constituency was won by Semesa Sikivou, a Fijian Association member.⁴⁷ The table below shows the election results for the Southern Constituency.

Table 2: 1963 Legislative Council Election: Southern Fijian Constituency

Constituency	Name of Candidate/Province of Origin/Political Affiliation	Number of Votes	Percentage of Votes
Southern Viti Levu	Semesa Sikivou (Rewa – Fijian Association)	10,152	78%
	Ratu Livai Volavola (Tailevu – Fijian Association)	2,600	20%
	Atafariki Waqabaca (Lau - Independent)	228	2%
Total Votes Counted		12, 980	

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette* April 30, 1963: 178)

⁴⁶ Norton, R. 1990: 70.

⁴⁷ Sikivou was a school teacher by profession. His political power base was the Fijian Teachers Association (FTA), a union which subscribed to the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party. See also Norton, R. 1990: 70.

Both Ganilau and Sikivou became spokespeople for the Fijian Administration as members of the Legislative Council.⁴⁸

Likewise in the 1963 election for a Fijian member in the Northern Constituency, Josua Rabukawaqa, a member of the Fijian Association won. The table below shows the election results for the Northern Constituency.

Table 3: 1963 Legislative Council Election: Northern Fijian Constituency

Constituency	Name of Candidate/Province of Origin/Political Affiliation	Number of Votes	Percentage of Votes
Northern Constituency	Josua Rabukawaqa (Bua – Fijian Association)	4,157	77%
	Militoni V. Leweniqila (Macuata)	651	12%
	Julian B.N. Toganivalu (Tailevu)	581	11%
Total Votes Counted		5,389	

(Source: Fiji Royal Gazette, May 1, 1964: 186)

During the 1963 Legislative Council election, while western Fijians stood in constituencies within their vanua, eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs stood in constituencies outside of theirs, reflecting their political ambition, continued through party politics.

The Alliance Party and its Fijian Association Arm

By mid-1965 the three future constituent bodies of the Alliance Party, namely the Fijian Association, Indian Alliance and the General Electors had already been meeting to form a party.⁴⁹ Sir John Falvey, who was adviser to the Fijian

⁴⁸ Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese. 1997. *The Pacific Way: A Memoir*. University of Hawaii: 57.

⁴⁹ See *The Fiji Times*, 23 June, 1965.

cane growers, was instrumental in organising the formation of the Alliance through the Fijian Association.⁵⁰ Earlier on in 1956, Sir Maurice Scott, as legal advisor to the Fijian Affairs Board, facilitated the formation of the Fijian Association.⁵¹ The link between the General Electors and the Fijian Association, as demonstrated in the gestures by Scott and Falvey, continued the colonial link between chiefs in the Matanitu iTaukei and Europeans. This time around it was in the realm of party politics. The Alliance Party was finally launched in March, 1966, prior to the Legislative Council election of that year.⁵²

Modeled after Malaysia's Alliance Party, its formation reflected the political environment from which it emerged; a product of the inter-racial negotiations prior to independence as well as the influence of the eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefly establishment.⁵³ This chiefly establishment and its European counterpart considered that the way forward for an independent, multiracial and multicultural society like Fiji was through a multi-racial political party. This was a political necessity at the time which would have harnessed a polarization of political demands from different racial camps. Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Fiji's first and longest serving Prime Minister, argued that:

The pressures consisted principally of calls by the Indian community for a common roll method of election and by the European community for an unofficial majority. Fijian political attention was focused on the Deed of Cession and the desire that Fiji should be preserved as a Fijian country.⁵⁴

Prior to the 1965 constitutional conference in London, the major political groups were involved in interracial dialogue regarding major constitutional issues such as the adoption of a common roll system of voting and the protection of Fijian rights as stated in the Deed of Cession Charter. Participants included representatives from the Fijian Association, the Fiji Congress Party, the Rotuman Association, the European electors, the Solomon Islands and New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) groups, the Fiji Minority Party, the Chinese and Tongan communities, and the two independent members of the Legislative

⁵⁰ See also Vakatora, T.R. 1999. *From the Mangrove Swamps*. 25.

⁵¹ See also Norton, 1990: 46.

⁵² See *The Fiji Times*, 14 March, 1966. Fiji Times Ltd., Suva, Fiji.

⁵³ See Ali, A. 1973. "The Fiji General Election of 1972" in *The Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 8. Oxford University Press: 173. See also Horowitz, D. L.. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. University of California Press, Berkeley: 579.

⁵⁴ See Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese. 1997: 62.

Council, Sukru Rahman and Vijay R. Singh. Although all members of the Federation Party boycotted the pre-conference meetings, the meetings went ahead nevertheless. What was generally accepted at these meetings was that the introduction of common roll was ideal but it was premature to introduce it to Fiji at that time.⁵⁵

In the informal talk which was spearheaded by A.D. Patel and attended by members of the Legislative Council, it was commonly agreed that Fijian land rights were entrenched and the issue was not to be further discussed. Additionally, they also agreed to the maintenance of links with the Crown.⁵⁶ In the Legislative Council debate for the adoption of a common roll A.D. Patel had foreseen and argued for the long-term benefit of the adoption of a common electoral roll. He finally conceded to the adoption of both a common roll and a communal roll.⁵⁷ Such debates not only led to compromising positions but also helped in the realization of the need for a multi-ethnic approach to address political issues regarding an independent Fiji. Compromising situations which arose thereafter influenced the formation of a moderate and multi-ethnic political party which was to cater for all ethnic groups. The Alliance party was therefore, considered by its founders as a product of political conciliation.

However, in spite of the promotion of "political moderation" which appeared to have been the hallmark of the Alliance Party, in terms of Fijian political development, the dominance of eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs in the pre-independence negotiations explains more about the nature of the new multiracial party, in that the Fijian Association arm was to be a promoter of the eastern and northeastern Fijian orthodoxy. In the 1965 constitutional conference in London the representatives of Fijians were all eastern and northeastern Fijians and members of the Fijian Association. These were Ratu George K. Cakobau (Vunivalu of Bau), his cousin Ratu Edward T. Cakobau, Ratu Kamisese Mara, Ratu Penaia Ganilau, Josua Rabukawaqa and Semesa Sikivou.⁵⁸ An interesting development here, as far as Fijian politics is concerned, is that chiefs from other regions in Fiji were excluded in the pre-

⁵⁵ Ibid., 1997: 74-75.

⁵⁶ Lal, B.V. 1992: 195.

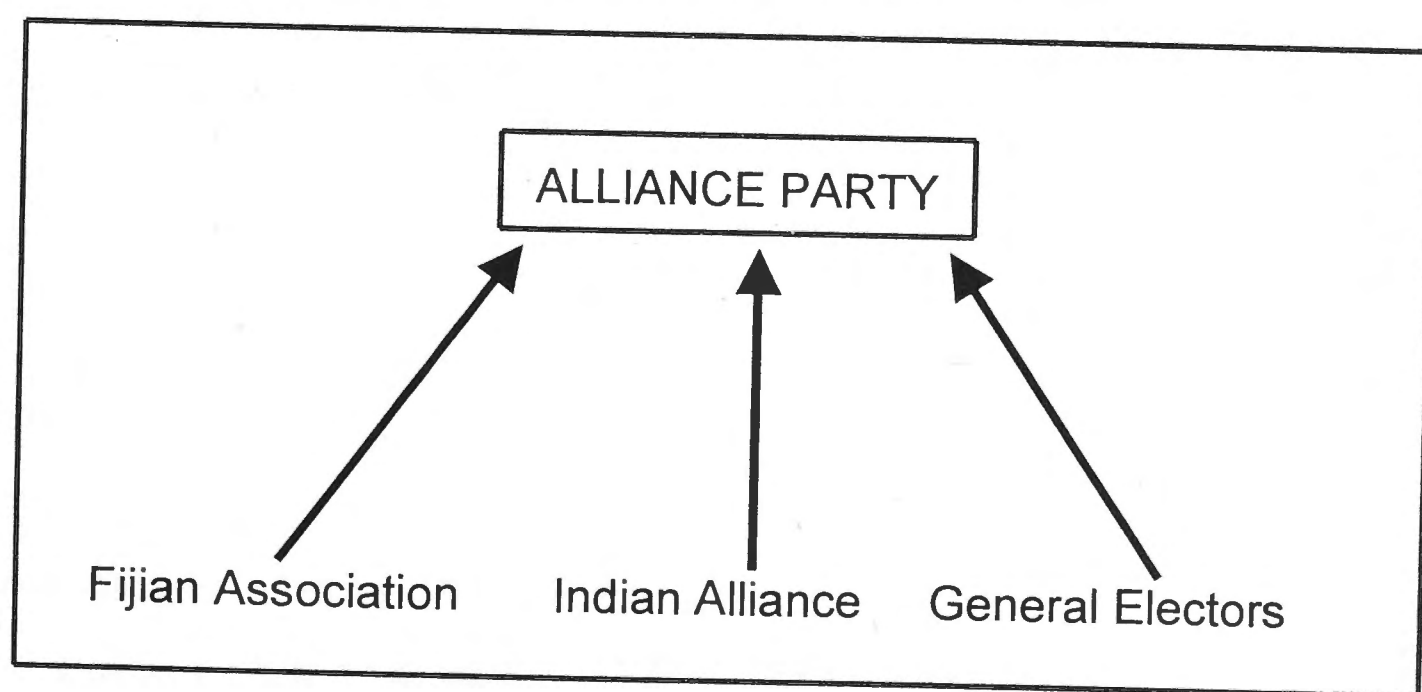
⁵⁷ Norton, R. 1990: 55-56.

⁵⁸ See Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese. 1997: 75. See also Norton, R. 1990: 55-56.

independence negotiations. There was even no chiefly representatives from the “Yasayasa vaka-Ra” or western Fiji. It reflected the continued attempt by the eastern and northeastern elites to marginalize the views of egalitarian social groups who were not only traditionally independent but in whose region much of Fiji’s resources were. In Fijian political thinking, the politics of moderation and conciliation promoted by the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance party was propelled by powerful political agendas which were entrenched through historical processes.

The Alliance Party was a “three-legged stool” in terms of its ethnic foundation, however, the legs of the stool were uneven in the sense that the Fijian Association members dominated the party. Additionally, although multiracial in its structure, like the Indo-Fijian-dominated National Federation Party, which had more Indo-Fijian members, the Alliance Party, likewise, had more Fijian members. Out of a total of 14,304 registered Alliance voters who were registered prior to the 1982 election, 73% were indigenous Fijians, 14.71% were Indo-Fijians, and 11.86% were General Electors. In the same period, the National Federation Party registered 9,799 voters out of which 96% were Indo-Fijians, 3.6% were indigenous Fijians and 0.36% were General Electors.⁵⁹ This continued the colonial legacy of racial compartmentalization of politics. The figure below shows the racial compartments of the Alliance Party.

Figure 11: Structure of the Alliance Party



⁵⁹ See *The Alliance Newsletter*, Issue No. 8, April 1982. Alliance Headquarters, Suva, Fiji: 58.

Overall, these figures reflect ethnic polarization in Fiji's political parties, Fiji's voters who wanted to join the Alliance Party became members through one of the three ethnic based constituent arms. This in my view became a major weakness of the party as each arm became "a party within a party", implying that the different ethnic supporters of the party in the three major ethnic divisions had different expectations of the existence of the party. It was a "marriage of convenience" and over time, the only people who were really clear about the objectives and direction of the organization were the party leaders themselves, or more specifically, leaders of the Fijian Association. The military coups of 1987 contradicted and weakened the original multiracial objective of the party, given that leading members of the Fijian Association were at the forefront of the coups.⁶⁰

It became obvious that the majority of Fijians who supported the Fijian Association had done so under the powerful influence of the Matanitu iTaukei through patron-client politics. They became supporters of the Fijian Association through the traditional obligations of "vakarokoroko" (respect) and "vakarorogo" (obedience) for their leaders. The transition from Matanitu iTaukei to Soqosoqo iTaukei through communal politics led to a situation where supporters of the Fijian Association saw no distinction between the Matanitu iTaukei or Fijian Administration and the Soqosoqo iTaukei or Fijian Association. In this context, there was no detailed understanding of the workings of a modern political party system as such, let alone the implications of it as being part of a multi-ethnic party nor its role in promoting liberal democracy upon which the new system of leadership and government was based.

A major weakness of the Fijian Association was its attempt to gloss over the existence of diverse customary practices and realities within Fijian society. It was an attempt to unite Fijians under one political umbrella where political arrangements were already pre-determined by its controlling elites continuing the politics of clientelism.⁶¹ This structural foundation of the Fijian Association laid the basis for future contradictions amongst the different arms of the Alliance Party and within Fijian society as a whole. It resulted in the disintegration of the

⁶⁰ See also Lal, B.V. 1992: 267-275.

⁶¹ See also Durutalo, A. 2000, in Lal, B.V. (ed): 73.

party after its defeat in the 1987 election as the military coups threw up a number of precarious political situations relating to the nature and organization of the Alliance Party. One of these was the multiple task of the Fijian Association in trying to maintain a balance between its role in satisfying the demands of its multiracial members and simultaneously secure its paramount location within the larger Fijian polity.

Since its formation in 1966, multi-ethnic cooperation within the Alliance Party was based on both ethnicity and class. Each of the three ethnic components of the party appealed to their own ethnic group for support first and foremost and this was based on how each category viewed the Alliance as a political party. For the majority of indigenous Fijian supporters, support for the Alliance was taken to imply the protection of the paramountcy of Fijian rights and interests. It exposed the vulnerable political arrangement within the Fijian Association when the majority of its Fijian supporters followed the leaders through the patron-clientele network without understanding the full implications of being members of a multi-ethnic political party, let alone the promotion of the liberal democratic ideology. Additionally, the party had members of different social classes and was controlled by a powerful class across the ethnic divide. As far as the Fijian Association was concerned, the majority of its grass root supporters were the under-classes in the rural areas as well as the urban poor, whose main support for the party was based on patron-clientelism. As explained earlier in this chapter, Nayacakalou argued that the Fijian Association should have been allowed to evolve through its components parts from people with similar interests rather than being imposed from above by the Fijian chiefly elites. I have also argued elsewhere that a major weakness of the Alliance Party, more so its Fijian Association component was that it was supported by the unity of the "have nots", in modern economic terms. Within a multiracial society like Fiji this was a politically volatile situation when an ethnic group could end up blaming other ethnic groups for their poverty or marginalisation.⁶²

⁶² Ibid., 2000: 75.

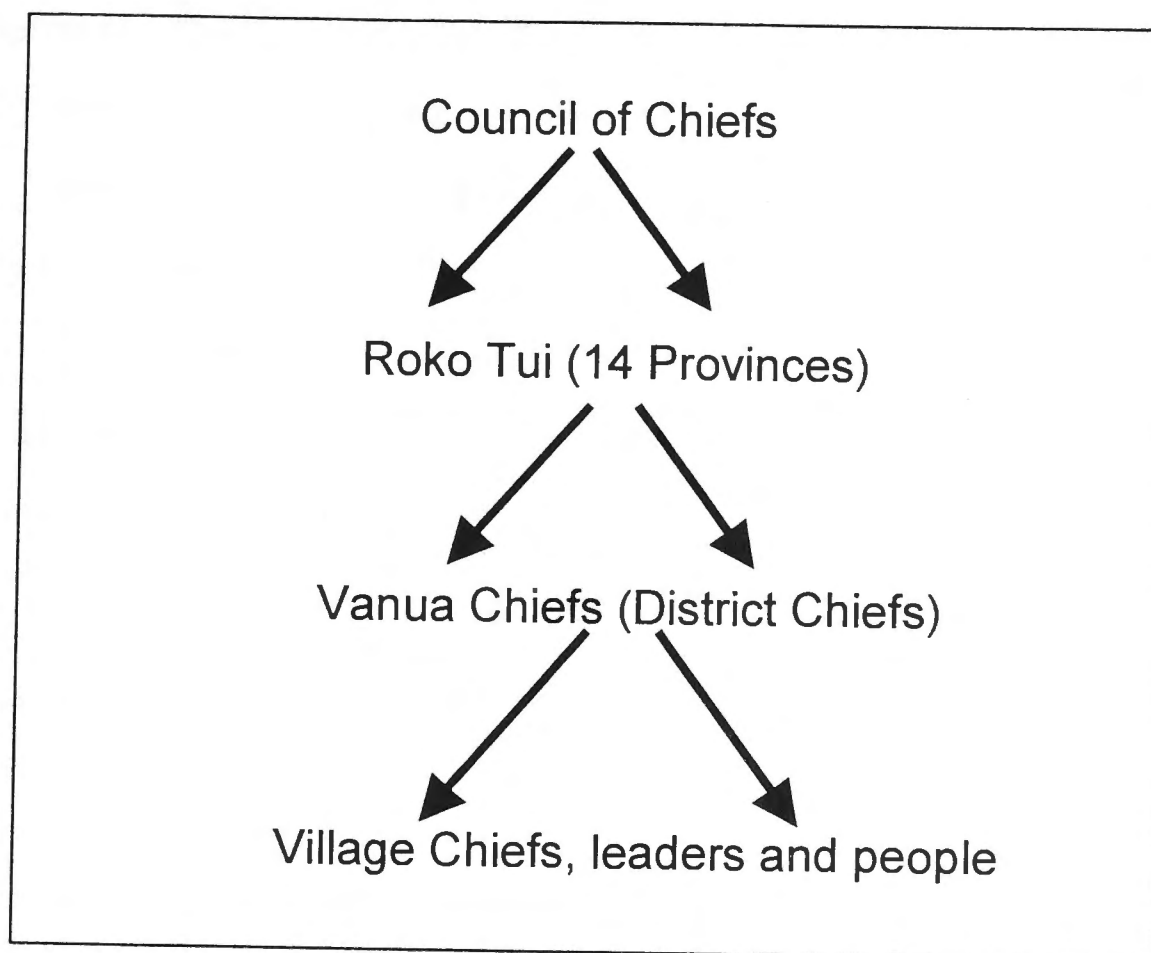
The expectations of Fijian Association leaders were different from those of their followers. An obvious weakness of such a political arrangement was the attempt to unite people with different socio-political and economic backgrounds under one political umbrella. The Fijian Association depended on the patron-client political network in the Fijian Administration for its survival as well as that of the Alliance as a multiracial party. As Clapham has argued:

One of the strongest, most alluring, and at the same time most dangerous forms of clientelism is the mobilization of ethnic identities...From a political viewpoint, ethnicity may be seen as a means for giving a moral bond or cement to clientelist network. The party leadership is placed under an obligation to look after the interests of its constituent race, tribe, caste or religious group; equally to the point, the leadership acquires a kind of legitimacy as the authentic representative of that group, regardless of the enormous differences of class and wealth, and in some respects of political interests, between it and its followers. Clientelism which depends for its existence on a hierarchy ordered society in which class differences are often intense, both serves as a mechanism for maintaining ruling class interests and, at the same time, systematically inhibits the articulation of class as a source of overt political conflict.⁶³

The politics of patron-clientelism which evolved out of the system of Indirect rule involved the creation and maintenance of patron-client relations through the hierarchy of relationships in the Fijian Administration. This began at the apex of the Fijian Administration with the Council of Chiefs. The line of command went down the ranks to the "Roko Tui" at the provincial level and chiefs as well as vanua chiefs at village level. The diagram below illustrates the hierarchy of patron-client politics within Fijian society.

⁶³ Clapham, C. 1985. *Third World Politics: An Introduction*. University of Wisconsin Press, U.S.A.: 57-58.

Figure 12: Patron-Client Politics



This network was utilized by the Fijian Association to secure its power base in the villages. Its usage influenced the thinking of ordinary Fijians to believe that the Alliance Party was not only part of the Fijian Administration as the protector and defender of Fijian interests, but more important it was the only defender and promoter of Fijian interests. Its acceptance was influenced by the dominance of powerful and influential eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefs in the Matanitu iTaukei, Legislative Council and other government services. Savu explains:

Na Fijian Association e a vakamuria ka tokona ga na ka e a vakatura mai na Matanitu vaka-Koloni me vaka ni ra cakacaka kina ko ira na turaga me vakataki Mara, Tuivanuavou, Penaia, George, kei na so tale. Dina ga ni ra lewe levu sara vei ira na iTaukei ka ra lewe ni Fijian Association era sega ni duavata kei ira na veiliutaki, era sa muri galugalu tu ga.⁶⁴

The Fijian Association followed and supported whatever was proposed by the Colonial Government since chiefs like Mara, Tuivanuavou, Penaia, George and others were employed in it. Even though many indigenous Fijians who were members of the Fijian Association disagreed with the leaders, they continued to follow silently.

Respect for the vanua and chiefs, as well as the fear of being dominated by another race, maintained the loyalty of indigenous Fijians within the Fijian Association between 1963 and 1987 when the first Fijian military coup occurred.

⁶⁴ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

While the organization of the Alliance Party on the whole depicted a multi-racial arrangement, the division of the party into ethnic compartments reveals the complex nature of any attempt to promote multi-racialism in such a structure. In the long term the structure of the party itself proved to be a major weakness due to a number of fundamental reasons. From an ethnic Fijian perspective, the Fijian Association arm represented mostly eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefly interests. Their over-representation as well as those of their educated commoners depicted the party as another regional-based one. Fijians in other regions, more so those in western Viti Levu, viewed the Alliance party as such.⁶⁵ This led to the formation of a number of alternative Fijian political parties, a few at the beginning of party politics but more after 1987.

Within Fijian society, the Fijian Association began to confront real political challenges in the 1972 general election, the first election after independence. In eastern and northeastern Fiji, a general breakaway from the Fijian Association began after the 1966 Legislative Council election with the formation of the Fiji Independent Party in 1969 as well as Fijians joining the National Federation Party. The two Fijian political parties in western Viti Levu had amalgamated to form the National Democratic Party in the 1966 Legislative Council election.

The 1966 Legislative Council Election

The 1966 Legislative Council election was significant in the sense that by then, major political parties were formed and political leanings were visible after the formation of the Alliance Party in 1966. By 1966 there were two dominant political parties, the Alliance and the Federation Party. Thirty-five seats were contested in the 1966 Legislative Council election. The table below outlines party competition in the nine Fijian seats during the 1966 election.

⁶⁵ See also Norton, R. 1990: 61-64.

Table 4: 1966 Legislative Council Election: Fijian Constituencies

Constituency	Name of candidate/Party	No. of votes	Percentage of winning votes	Percentage of registered voters who polled
Macuata/Bua Fijian	Emosi Vuakatagane (All) Militoni V. Leweniqila (Ind)	2,885 1,774	70%	79.1%
Cakaudrove Fijian	Jone Naisara (All) Anare M. Tuidraki	4,908 949	84%	85.1%
Suva-Rewa Fijian	Alipate V. Sikivou (All) Ratu Jone C. Mataitini (Ind) Noa N. Nawalowalo (Ind)	4,427 1,779 1,268	59%	Not available
Tailevu Fijian	William B. Toganivalu (All) Livai Volavola (Ind) Meli S. Baleilakeba (Ind)	3,347 1,530 383	63%	83%
South Central Viti Levu Fijian	David Toganivalu (All) Penaia L. Latianara (Ind) Meli R. Loki (Ind) Ifereimi Nakaiwalu (Ind)	4,368 981 873 205	68%	81.3%
North West Viti Levu Fijian	Sakiasi Waqanivavalagi (All) Isaia Vakabua (Ind) Jone Ravunakana	6,354 1,670 1,268	68%	79.2%
South West Viti	Peniame	5,600	68%	83.2%

Levu Fijian	Naqasima (All) Apisai Tora (Nat. Dem)	2,632		
Lau Rotuma Fijian	Jonati Mavoa (Alliance – unopposed)	-	-	-
Lomaiviti Kadavu Fijian	Solomone Momoivalu (Alliance – unopposed)	-	-	

(Source: *The Fiji Times*, 12 October, 1966: 5)

Within Fijian society competition to the Alliance Party was seen in the caliber of independent candidates, most of whom were prominent chiefs and well known individuals from eastern and western Viti Levu. In the Suva-Rewa Fijian communal constituency, the Vunivalu of Rewa and high chief in the Burebasaga Confederacy, Ratu Jone Mataitini stood as an independent candidate. In the Tailevu Fijian communal constituency, Ratu Livai Volavola a high chief in the province of Tailevu stood as an independent candidate. Likewise in south central Viti Levu, high chief of Tamavua in the province of Naitasiri and leader of a clan which owns much of the land in the northern part of Suva city, the late Ratu Meli Loki, stood as an independent candidate. In western Viti Levu Apisai Tora was a candidate for his National Democratic Party in the South West Viti Levu Fijian communal constituency. In the northeast Militoni Leweniqila, who later became a prominent and long term Alliance member, stood as an independent candidate. The line up of prominent individuals as independent candidates in the Fijian communal constituencies highlighted a number of things: first that Fijians from different vanua and regions still demonstrated independent political thinking in making modern political choices. Second, not all Fijians supported the Fijian Association and the Alliance Party from the beginning even though the Alliance Party won all nine Fijian communal seats. Likewise, the Alliance Party also won all nine cross voting seats as can be seen in the table below. However, a few Fijians stood as independent candidates. Nemani Waka for instance, won 25% of the votes in the Northern and Eastern Cross Voting Constituency against Ratu Mara.

Table 5: 1966 Legislative Council Election: Cross Voting Results

Constituency	Name of Candidate/Party	Number of votes	Percentage of winning votes	Total Number of Votes Counted/Percentage of registered voters who polled
Central Cross Voting Fijian	Ratu Edward Cakobau (Alliance - unopposed)	-	-	-
Central Cross Voting Indian	Abdul Lateef (All) M.S.Tikaram (Fed) C.P.Singh S.N.Kanhai M.Columbus M.Azam	15,498 13,487 7,939 1,505 1,077 987	38.2%	40,493 (Not available)
Central Cross Voting General	D.W.Brown (All) J. Ah Koy D.J.Whippy T.J.Mcnally	21,208 5,604 2,622 976	70%	30,410 (Not available)
Northern and Eastern Cross Voting Fijian	Ratu K.K.T. Mara (All) Nemani Waka	26,025 8,635	75%	34,660 (Not available)
Northern and Eastern Cross Voting Indian	Vijay R. Singh (All) Vijay Singh (Fed)	26,634 8,068	77%	34,702 (Not available)
Northern and Eastern Cross Voting General	Dr. Lindsay Verrier (Alliance – Unopposed)	-	-	
Western Cross Voting Fijian	Joshua Toganivalu (All) Penaia Rokovuni (Fed) Isikeli Nadalo (Nat. Dem)	25,960 23,171 4,242	49%	53,373 (Not available)
Western Cross Voting Indian	K.S.Reddy (All) Deo Narayan (Fed)	28,200 25,509	53%	53,709 (Not available)

Western Cross Voting General	Mrs. L. Livingston (All) Rev. P.K. Davies	23,768 22,677	51%	46,445 (Not available)
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(Source: *The Fiji Times*, 12 October, 1966: 5)

All nine Indian seats were won by the Federation Party (**See Appendix F**). The results of the 1966 Legislative Council election reflected ethnic polarization in Fiji's party politics, continuing the trend of ethnic compartmentalization during the colonial era.

Narratives of Fijian Nationalism: From Nawai and the "Viti Cauravou", to the Fijian Chamber of Commerce and Fiji Independent Party (1969 – 1975)

In the early twentieth century, Fijian nationalism as an ideology for the economic advancement of indigenous Fijians consciously began with Apolosi R. Nawai. His attempt to start the "Viti Kabani" or the "Fijian Exporting Company" was suppressed by the colonial government and the Matanitu iTaukei through Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna. This suppression did not eradicate the spirit behind it and by 1923 another movement called the "Viti Cauravou" or the Young Fijian Society was formed by former students of Davuilevu (later Lelean Memorial School) and Vuli ni Tu or Queen Victoria School.⁶⁶

The forum was intended to discuss issues which affected youths as well as other Fijians. The group recognised that there was a general sense of malaise within Fijian society and wanted the society to facilitate progress so that Fijians could be economically advanced like non-Fijians. To achieve its objectives, the society proposed that Fijian youths be educated in "first class" schools in Fiji, that Fijian farmers should control what they produced instead of depending on European and Chinese business people, and that the purity of the Fijian race be preserved. Intermarriage especially by Fijian women with non-Fijians was to be discouraged.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Davuilevu, later Lelean Memorial School, was one of the first schools in Fiji which was founded after the arrival of the missionaries in 1835. Queen Victoria School or "Vuli ni Turaga" was originally established for the sons of Fijian chiefs only. It later accepted commoner Fijians as well.

⁶⁷ See Lal, B.V. 1992: 71.

While the ideals of the Viti Cauravou encouraged personal advancement, group pride and social solidarity, cultural integrity and economic development, the society failed to gain the support and recognition of Fijian elites who controlled power in the Matanitu iTaukei. The Council of Chiefs based its rejection of the society on its proposal to ban the intermarriage of Fijian women with non-Fijians. However, a more crucial concern to the Council of Chiefs was the society's proposal to open up the chiefly council so that twenty of its members could be included. This, as argued by the society, was an opportunity for commoner Fijians to gain from educational and economic opportunities as well as to enable accountability within Fijian society. Perhaps more fundamental to the rejection of the society was its proposal for the improvement of the condition of the Fijian workers on European plantations. Such a demand threatened the alliance between chiefs in the system of indirect rule, as pacifiers of their own people, and Europeans.⁶⁸ Lal argues that:

The combined opposition of chiefs and colonial officials ensured the failure of the Viti Cauravou. One may only speculate what might have happened had it succeeded. The educational and economic gap that separated Fijians and other groups in the colony might have narrowed, and the problem that gap later produced, including heightened racial animosity, might have been easier to resolve. In retrospect, the failure of the Viti Cauravou looks like a lost opportunity.⁶⁹

The desire for Fijian economic advancement re-appeared in the 1950s when a Fijian group based mainly in Suva had been meeting about the plight of indigenous Fijians in the new economy. Their non-direct involvement in the economic sector was the main concern here. A Fijian Chamber of Commerce was formed by this group to facilitate and promote Fijian business interests. Viliame Savu, one of the leaders of the Fijian Chamber of Commerce, explained that the group had seriously considered earlier efforts by Fijians to improve their economic conditions which were, however, suppressed by the colonial government and the Matanitu iTaukei. Establishing a similar cooperative venture as attempted by the Viti Kabani was a consideration at that time.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Ibid., 1992: 73-74.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 1992: 74.

⁷⁰ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

The membership of the Fijian Chamber of Commerce which had reached twenty-seven thousand in the mid-1960s wanted to register a wholesale company under the name "Viti Kabani". However this was stopped by the colonial government out of fear that a similar movement to that of Nawai's might be revived. Instead the name "Taukei Pacific Fiji Company Limited" was accepted by the colonial government. The company managed to import goods from overseas for a number of retail stores which had been established around Viti Levu. However, the biggest obstacle which the Fijian Chamber of Commerce confronted was resistance from Fijian members of the Legislative Council who openly declared that the FCC was nothing more than another subversive movement like Nawai's. The FCC equally suffered the same fate. Savu explains:

Era wele na vulagi e da sa mai veivakacacani tiko ga vaka ikeda na iTaukei ena dua na ka e gadrevi vakalevu kina noda veitokoni kei na duavata.⁷¹

While non-Fijians did their own things, indigenous Fijians destroyed each other and did not contribute positively to help each other in an area where support and unity was needed.

Savu acknowledges the support of the National Federation Party leader, A. D. Patel in trying to promote the organization. In a big rally for the Fijian Chamber of Commerce held in Lautoka, Ratu Mara's short-notice cancellation of the invitation to open the rally was taken up by A.D. Patel. Members of the FIP believed that the cancellation was a deliberate effort by the chiefly political elites to not only disrupt the proposed business venture but also distance themselves from an effort by ordinary Fijians to improve their economic conditions. For the group, it indirectly implied the uncaring attitude of the eastern and northeastern chiefly elite about the ordinary Fijian concern for their economic progress. Savu asserted that the elites were concerned first and foremost about their own interests and their subservient role to please the colonial administrators. After the rally, Savu was called by the Governor for an interview on the objectives and intentions of the Fijian Chamber of Commerce.⁷²

⁷¹ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

⁷² Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

In their attempt to abolish the Fijian Chamber of Commerce, the two elite Tovata chiefs, Ratu Mara, who was then Chief Minister, and Ratu Penaia Ganilau, who was Secretary of Fijian Affairs, called Savu for a meeting where he was interrogated about the work of the FCC. Savu explains:

Ena levu ni katakata nei Ratu Penaia, sa qai tukuna vei au meu kakua sara ni la'ki vakayaco bese ni FCC/FIP ki Vanua Levu taucoko. Au tukuna vei Ratu Penaia ni o koya e sega ni Turaga Bale mai Vanua levu taucoko, kau sega tale ga ni kilai koya. Ke vaka e rau sega ni tarovi ira rawa na vulagi mera caka bese mai Vanua levu, qai rawa vakacava me rau tarovi au me vaka ni'u dua na iTaukei.⁷³

In Ratu Penaia's intense anger, he ordered me not to conduct any Fijian Chamber of Commerce meeting or Fiji Independent Party meeting in the whole of Vanua Levu. I told Ratu Penaia that he was not overall chief in the whole of Vanua Levu and that I also did not know him. I added that if they could not even stop non-Fijians from holding meetings in Vanua Levu, why should they stop me, an indigenous Fijian?

Active resistance from within the eastern and northeastern chiefly establishment, as seen in the concerted effort by Mara and Ganilau, and by the colonial administration, caused the collapse of the Fijian Chamber of Commerce. By 1969, a year prior to Fiji's independence, its members broke away from the Fijian Association and formed the Fiji Independent Party, to continue to fight for indigenous Fijian rights, as perceived by the group. Viliame Savu became the President of the FIP until 1975 when most members joined Sakeasi Butadroka's Fijian Nationalist Party.⁷⁴ The evolution and pursuit of Fijian nationalism in the twentieth century began with an anti-colonial and anti-chiefly establishment orientation. With the departure of the colonizers, and with the practice of patron client politics, Indo-Fijians became the easy scape-goat targets for Fijian nationalists. Butadroka's emergence in the political scene began with his dissension from the Alliance Party in 1973. While he recognized the power of the Fijian chiefly ruling class and the Indo-Fijian Gujarati ruling class in the post-colonial Fijian economy, he conveniently blamed a whole race for Fijian economic marginalisation. This concealed the fact that the majority of Indo-Fijians were just as poor as the majority of indigenous Fijians. Perhaps, it

⁷³ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

⁷⁴ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

was worse for Indo-Fijians because they did not own land. Both groups were victims of the same political system.

Objectives of the Fiji Independent Party

The FIP outlined a number of objectives, foremost amongst which was the return of political leadership to Fijians at the time of independence. Fijian rights based on the Deed of Cession charter, which members of the party believed should have been the basis for the pre-independence constitutional negotiations, were overlooked by the Fijian chiefly elite who represented Fijians during the 1960s pre-independence constitutional negotiation in London. There was a need for the British Crown to hand Fiji back to indigenous Fijian chiefs and their people since they were the only ethnic group which ceded Fiji to Queen Victoria. The members of the Fiji Independent Party believed that the leadership of the Fijian Association had failed in their task to safeguard Fijian interests and the situation contributed to the formation of their party.⁷⁵ Savu explains:

Na Fijian Association e a tokoni vakalevu sara mai vei keda na itaukei ena gauna koya me vaka ni ra a vakaitavi na turaga era a cakacaka vakamatanitu tu ena veiliutaki vakoloni ena gauna koya. E sa mai luluqa na veitokoni ni sa voleka mai na tugalala me vaka ni ratou sa sega ni vakamuria o Ratu Mara kei ira na nona ilawalawa na domo ni Taukei ka ratou sa cakava ka vakamuria ga na veika e ratou nanuma ni dodonu me caka ena vukuda na iTaukei. E tekivu me leqa ka cala kina vei keda na iTaukei na soli mai ni tu galala vei Viti. Eda se "struggle" tiko ga qo. Sa mai oti e tolu na coup, ia, e se sega ga ni oti se wali rawa.⁷⁶

The Fijian Association was once widely supported by indigenous Fijians because at that time it was administered by chiefs who were civil servants in the colonial government. However, support for the Fijian Association had weakened immediately prior to political independence because Ratu Mara and his group did not follow what indigenous Fijians wanted but did what they thought was right for indigenous Fijians. This was the root cause of the problem and the path to political independence became wrong to indigenous Fijians. We are still struggling now. We have had three coups and nothing has been solved yet.

A relevant issue which emerged prior to independence leading to the formation of the FIP as an alternative to the Fijian Association was the future of Fijians in

⁷⁵ Interview with Viliame Savu. October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

⁷⁶ Interview with Viliame Savu. October 4, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

terms of the return of their resources which were ceded to Queen Victoria and explained in clause I of the Treaty of Cession which reads:

That the possession of and full sovereignty and dominion of the whole of the group of islands in the South Pacific known as the Fijis...and over the inhabitants thereof, together with the possession of and sovereignty over the waters adjacent of and over all ports harbours havens roadsteads rivers estuaries and other waters and all reefs and foreshores within or adjacent thereto, are hereby ceded to and accepted on behalf of Her Said Majesty the Queen of Britain and Ireland, her heir and successors, to the intent that from this time forth, the said islands and the waters and reefs and other places are aforesaid lying within or adjacent thereto may be annexed to and be a possession and dependency of the British Crown.⁷⁷

Savu argues that the chiefs who represented Fijians at the 1965 constitutional conference in London had compromised their stand regarding what they termed as fundamental indigenous rights on the ownership of their resources. These included land and other resources. Land is an important issue for it forms the material basis of Fijian culture. The importance of land to Fijians and other Pacific Island societies is eloquently explained by Baledrokadroka when he states that:

As a place-based people, land to the Fijian was his life. When Fijians speak of their land, they invariably refer to it as "na qau vanua" or my land, or land that sustains me and from which I eat. Lasaka elaborates that the meaning of this statement is far wider than it might first appear because its meaning implies that the land has fed its owners for past generations, and it will do so in future; on it depends their entire livelihood. It is often said that the land is the people, the two are interwoven closely and cannot be separated completely. Hence the belief that many Fijians tend to accept that if Fijian land were broken up the people and their society would disintegrate.⁷⁸

One of the major concerns of the FIP was the introduced British colonial law, founded on British or European thought and experience which was imposed through colonization. It over-rode customary law and practices which had sustained Fijians since time immemorial. Such law distorted the customary ways of resource usage and ownership. A main concern of the FIP was that Fijians were still not informed on the status of their resources at the time of

⁷⁷ The Fiji Islands – Legislation. "The Deed of Cession of Fiji to Great Britain, 10th October, 1874", as quoted in Baledrokadroka, J, in "The Fijian Understanding of the Deed of Cession Treaty of 1874". September 2003. Unpublished Paper. School of Law, Auckland University: Appendix A.

⁷⁸ Ibid., September 2003: 4-5. See also Lasaka, I. 1984. *The Fijian People: Before and After Independence 1959-1977*. Australian National University, Canberra: 49.

independence. Savu explained that when the state owned minerals so many meters underground, even if a village sits on top of the minerals, then the new law should be considered as problematic. The same principle extended to the sea where the state controlled resources a certain distance from the high tide mark. How a foreign power which moved in through colonization could impose law on a society which had lived in its traditional land since time immemorial, was a fundamental question posed by members of the Fiji Independent Party.⁷⁹ The encroaching power of the state in imposing laws which over-rode customary laws was an overall concern to the group. Currently, the SDL government is working on legislation for the return of Crown land as well as the "iqoliqoli" or traditional fishing ground to its indigenous owners.⁸⁰ Savu states that:

Na kena inaki levu na Fiji Independent Party, o ya me taqomaka, vakatorocaketaka, ka valataka na dodonu ni kawa iTaukei kei na Lotu Vakarisito me vaka na noda lotu na kawa iTaukei.⁸¹

The Fiji Independent Party was to look after, develop and fight for indigenous Fijian rights as well as promote Christianity as the religion of indigenous Fijians.

While the FIP considered British introduced law as problematic, Christianity, which came to Fiji from the same source, was considered good. Fiji was to be declared a Christian state, however, other religions should be allowed to practice their religion as they wished. Additionally, only Christian religious holidays were to be declared as public holidays.

Foreigners were to be allowed to stay and practice their businesses but were not to take part in politics. Linked to the first objective was the desire that only indigenous Fijians were to be members of parliament and also to hold the posts of prime minister and governor. Members of the Fiji Independent Party believed that Fijians alone should fight for their own rights. In this context, the FIP viewed ethnic politics as necessary and in need of strengthening.

⁷⁹ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

⁸⁰ See "Rabuka Labels PM Hypocrite", in *The Fiji Times*, 30 May, 2005. In a bid to unite Fijians and Fijian political parties, the ruling SDL government is working on a number of policies to attract Fijian support. These include the Blueprint for Affirmative action for indigenous Fijians and Rotumans, and the return of Crown land and the "iqoliqoli" or traditional fishing ground to indigenous owners.

⁸¹ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

Savu argues:

Au sega ni duavata ka'u sega tale ga ni lewena vakadua e dua na isoqosoqo vakapolitiki e veicurumaki na lewena. E dodonu meda kua ni lewena na iTaukei e dua na isoqosoqo vakapolitiki e veicurumaki na lewena me yacova ni sa vakadodonutaki kece na veika e baleta na noda dodonu vakalou e na noda Vanua. Oqo na vakabauta au tu kina. E sega ni kena ibalebale ni'u cati ira na vulagi.⁸²

I disagree with and will never support any multiracial political party. Indigenous Fijians should never support any multiracial political party until our God-given rights as indigenous people in our land is justified. This is my personal belief. It does not mean that I hate the visitors.

Fijians were to be considered a priority group in all types of development such as education, health, business and social services. This objective of the FIP was advocated by Butadroka's Fijian Nationalist Party from the 1970s and later adopted by Rabuka's SVT government between 1992 and 1999. It is currently being refined and adopted by the ruling SDL and Matanitu Vanua Coalition government.⁸³ Another objective of the FIP was the promotion of the Bauan dialect to be the official language in Fiji.⁸⁴ While the FIP attacked the eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefly hegemony for their marginalizing tactics, they otherwise embraced the dialect/language of the internal colonizers.

During the 1972 general election, the FIP contested the election in six constituencies in eastern, northeastern and southeastern Fiji.⁸⁵ Savu stood against a well known Fijian Association candidate, Uraia Koro and a well known Dockworkers General Secretary, Taniela Veitata.⁸⁶ The FIP was another regional party which concentrated mostly in eastern Fiji. The narrative behind the formation of the FIP highlights another perspective on the complexity of Fijian dissension as it emerges through party politics. In hindsight, issues highlighted by the FIP bordered on the broader framework of legitimacy and the legality of the Deed of Cession, considering that the thirteen chiefs who ceded

⁸² Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

⁸³ See also "Blueprint For the Protection of Fijian and Rotuman Rights and Interests, and the Advancement of their Development". Presentation to the Great Council of Chiefs by the Interim Prime Minister, Mr. Laisenia Qarase. 13 July, 2000.

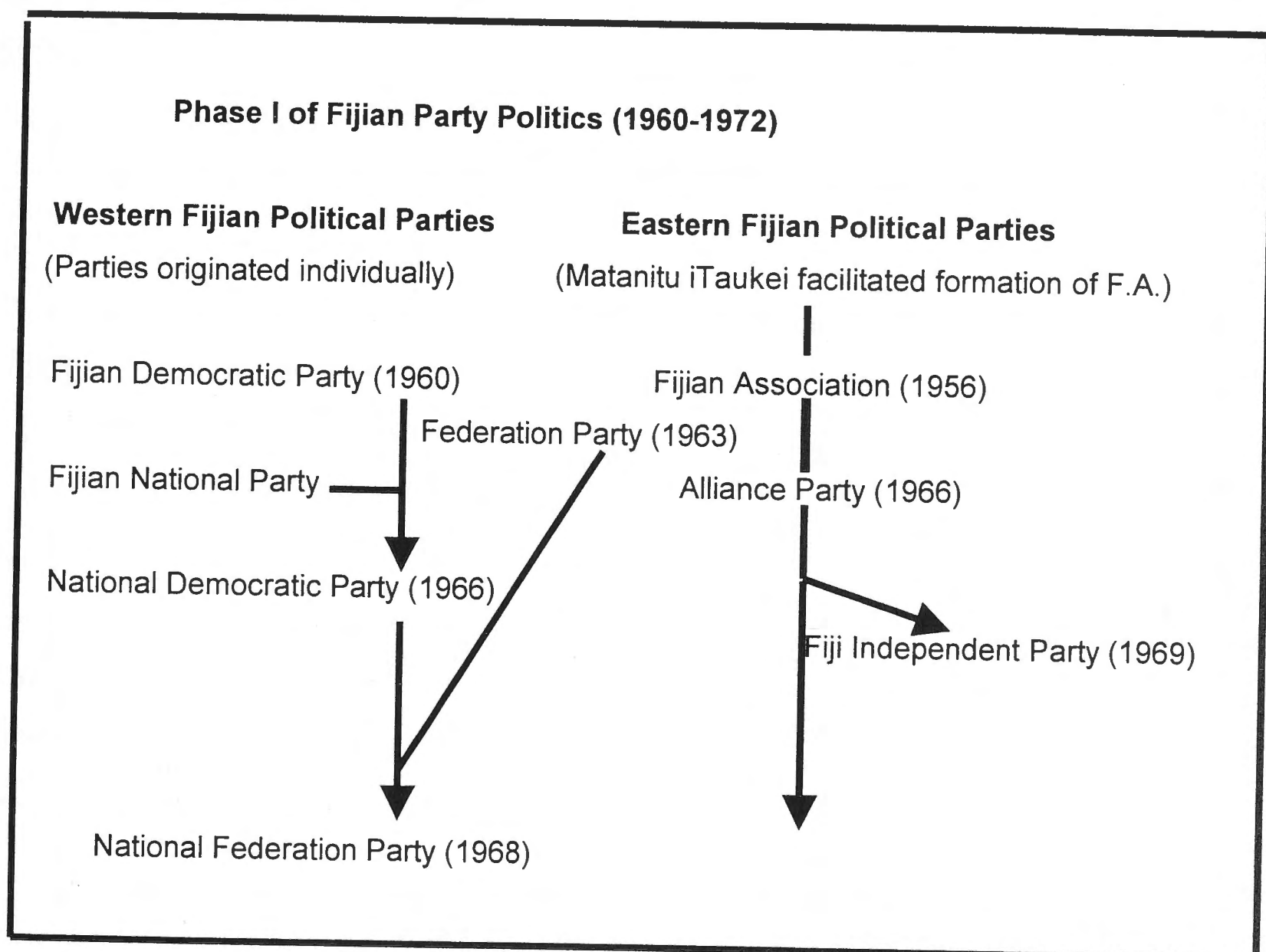
⁸⁴ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

⁸⁵ See Fiji Royal Gazette, Vol. 99 (4). Jan. 17, 1972: 207.

⁸⁶ *Fiji Royal Gazette*, Vol.99 (4), January 17, 1972. Government of Fiji :478. Taniela Veitata became a prominent member of the Taukei Movement after the 1987 General Elections. The Taukei Movement was most active in political destabilization after the defeat of the Alliance Party, prior to the 1987 military coups.

Fiji did not have the mandate of all chiefs in the numerous vanua throughout the group. Another perspective to Fijian dissension through party politics was expressed through multi-ethnic alliances as expressed by those joining Indo-Fijian-dominated political parties like the National Federation Party. This dissension was taken to a higher level with the formation of the Fiji Labour Party in 1985. The figure below illustrates phase I of Fijian party politics between 1960 and 1972.

Figure 13: Phase I of Fijian Party Politics (1960-1972)



The diagram highlight the formation and merger of political parties between 1960 and 1972.

Fijians in the National Federation Party

In 1968 there was further amalgamation between Tora and Nadalo's National Democratic Party with the Indo-Fijian-dominated Federation Party, leading to the renaming of the new party as the National Federation Party (NFP). As an Indo-Fijian party which emerged in western Viti Levu, championing the rights of cane farmers and other unions based in the west, the NFP appealed easily to dissatisfied Fijians in western Viti Levu. A common multi-ethnic ground amongst members was their resistance against the dual exploitation of the colonial state

as well as the domineering power of the eastern and northeastern Fijian establishment through the Matanitu iTaukei.

Prior to the 1972 general election, a number of indigenous Fijian dissidents from eastern and northeastern Fiji had joined the National Federation Party. These included Ro Asela Logavatu and Veitinia Fotofili, two of the first three Fijian women to contest general elections in Fiji.⁸⁷ Also included in the group were a number of high chiefs from eastern and northeastern Fiji. These included Ratu Glanville Lalabalavu, a member of the chiefly Ai Sokula and Tui Cakau clan in Somosomo Taveuni. Ratu Glanville later became a "Tui Cakau".⁸⁸ Ro Mosese Tuisawau and Ro Asela Logavatu were both from the chiefly clan of the Roko Tui Dreketi in Lomanikoro, Rewa, the seat of the Matanitu of Burebasaga or Burebasaga Confederacy. Ratu Julian Toganivalu of the "Masau"⁸⁹ clan of the Vunivalu of Bau and brother of the Toganivalu in the Alliance Party, had also defected from the Fijian Association to join the National Federation Party. It was evident at this stage of Fijian party politics that dissent was no longer confined to western Viti Levu but had roots in other regions of Fiji as well. Additionally, the desire to join other parties may have been attributed to people's exposure to education and other new factors such as the chance of becoming political leaders through other avenues apart from joining the Alliance Party, which at this time was the monopoly of a few chiefs. Fijian dissidents were political opportunists in the sense that they recognised and took advantage of other avenues of accessing power. This posed a direct long term challenge to the Alliance Party as it could no longer monopolise the ideology of multiracialism, nor its claim as the legitimate representative of indigenous Fijians. The paramountcy of the eastern and northeastern Fijian hegemony through a few of its elite became a contested ground not only by those outside of this domain but also from within the domain. The deconstruction of an orthodoxy became an imminent concern for leaders in the Fijian Association. This was an inherent contradiction in the Alliance Party which the Fijian Association struggled with

⁸⁷ The third woman was Adi Losalini Dovi who contested in the South-Eastern National Constituency as an Alliance candidate. The first Indo-Fijian woman to contest the General Elections was Irene Jay Narayan.

⁸⁸ This is the highest chiefly title in Cakaudrove as well as in the Matanitu of Tovata or Tovata Confederacy.

⁸⁹ The "Masau" is the herald or the "Matanivanua" of the Roko Tui Bau.

throughout the thirty-two years of its existence and between 1963 and 1987 when it participated in party politics.

The 1972 General Election

The 1972 general election was significant in a number of ways. It was the first election under the 1970 Constitution in which a new electoral system was used for the first time (**See map on 1972 constituency boundaries**). A bicameral Westminster system of government with a thirty-six member Senate or Upper House and a fifty-two member House of Representatives or Lower House was adopted. While members of the Senate were nominated, those in the House of Representatives were elected.⁹⁰ The Parliament consisted of a Upper House or Senate with 22 nominated members and a Lower House or House of Representatives with 52 elected members.⁹¹ The table below shows an ethnic breakdown of the 1970 electoral divisions.

Table 6: The 1970 Electoral Divisions

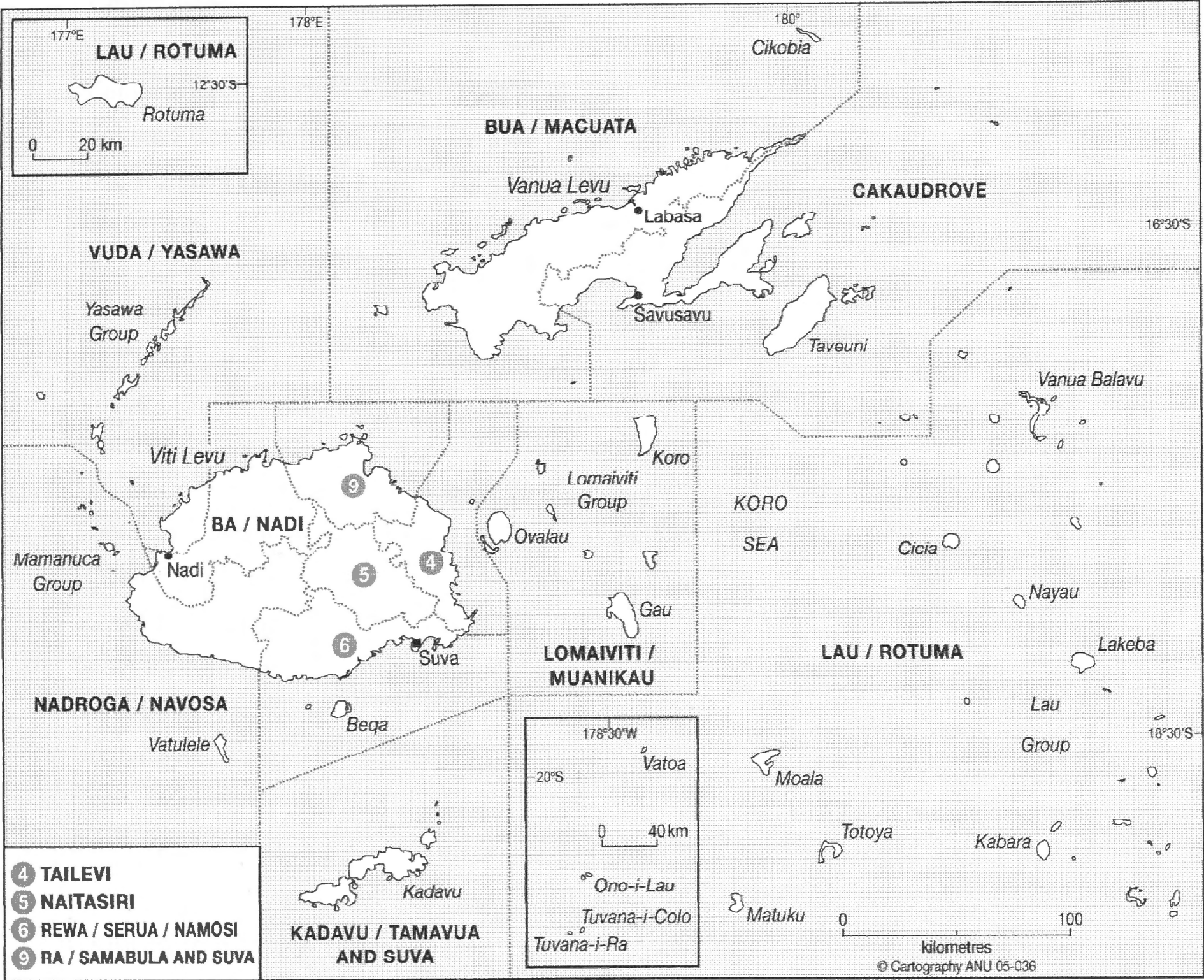
Ethnic Category	Communal Roll	National Roll
Fijian voters	12 Parliamentary seats	10 Parliamentary seats
Indian voters	12 Parliamentary seats	10 Parliamentary seats
General Voters	3 Parliamentary seats	5 Parliamentary seats

(Source: Report of the Royal Commission Parliamentary Paper No. 24 of 1975)⁹²

By the time of the 1972 general election, dissension in Fijian party politics had spread beyond western Viti Levu. Its expression through multi-ethnic alliance was seen in the number of Fijians who joined the National Federation Party, as already mentioned, and contested the election through the NFP. The table below shows the names of Fijian candidates in the National Federation Party who stood in some Fijian Communal and National constituencies against Alliance Party candidates during the 1972 general election.

⁹⁰ See also Lal, B.V.(ed) 1986: 76 – 77.
⁹¹ See also Lal, B.V. 1986. "Politics Since Independence: Continuity and Change, 1970-1982", in B.V. Lal (ed). *Politics in Fiji*. Allen & Unwin, Sydney, pp. 74-106, at pp.76-77.
⁹² See Report of the Royal Commission: Parliamentary Paper No. 24 of 1975. Parliament of Fiji:

FIJIAN CONSTITUENCIES UNDER THE 1970 CONSTITUTION



See Appendix A for 1970 Constituency Boundaries

Table 7: 1972 General Election: NFP Fijians and Rival Alliance Candidates: Fijian Communal and National Constituencies

Constituency	Alliance Candidates	National Federation Party (Fijian) Candidates
Cakaudrove Fijian Communal	Jone B. Naisara	Ratu Glanville Lalabalavu
Tailevu Fijian Communal	William Toganivalu	Anasa Degei
Kadavu/Suva City West Fijian Communal	Seci Nawalowalo	Dike B. Qumivutia
Nadroga/Navosa Fijian Communal	Peniame D. Naqasima	Apakuki Sasaroko
Ba West Fijian Communal	Serupepeti Naivalu	Josaia Qoro
Vanua Levu North and West National	Satyawan Jaduram	Atunaisa M. Maitoga
Lau Cakaudrove National	Ratu Sir Kamisese T. Mara	Tevita Vuniwai
South Central Suva West National	Prabhudass K. Bhindhi	Meli S, Baleilakeba
Suva East National	Mohammed Ramzan	Veitinia Fotofili
South Eastern National	Krishna S. Reddy	Ro Asela V. Logavatu
North-eastern National	Sakiasi Waqanivavalagi	Apimeleki Varakula
North Central National	Josua B. Toganivalu	Ratu Mosese V. Tuisawau
North Western National	Joveci Gavoka	Apisai V. Tora
South Western National	Vivekenand Sharma	Isikeli Nadalo

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*, Jan. 17, 1972: 206-207)

During the 1972 election, three Fijians on the National Federation Party tickets won their seats. They were Apisai Tora (North-Western National Constituency); Isikeli Nadalo (South-Western National Constituency); and Atunaisa M. Maitoga (Vanua Levu North and West Constituency). Maitoga defeated Ratu Penaia Ganilau, a high chief in Cakaudrove and Tovata Confederacy. Although Maitoga won in a national seat with a majority of non-Fijian votes, perhaps the crucial issue which was addressed for dissenting Fijians was that party politics provided an alternative avenue for accessing modern political leadership. The fact that Ganilau lost because of non-Fijian votes was immaterial, what was crucial was that party politics became a modern medium for accessing power first and foremost; after all non-Fijian voters were also Fiji citizens.

It was evident at this stage that by joining multiracial parties, some Fijians had the opportunity to not only identify similar interests across the racial divide but also challenge the eastern and northeastern chiefly power within the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party. The plight of chiefs in party politics has been an ongoing dilemma within Fijian society since the adoption of party politics as a means to modern political representation. It has reintroduced the dynamics of chiefly and leadership contests which existed prior to its fossilization through colonial rule. The issue has been whether chiefs should compete in elections, considering that defeat has far reaching implications in their standing as traditional leaders.⁹³ The table below shows the results of the 1972 general election and the constituencies in which the Alliance Party won.

⁹³ See also Durutalo, A. 2000, in Lal, B.V. (Ed): 81.

Table 8: 1972 General Election: Fijian Constituencies

Constituency	Candidate/Political Party	Total number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes	Total votes counted/Percentage of registered voters who polled
South West Fijian National	Isikeli Nadalo (NFP) Isireli Naborisi (Alliance)	9,793 (53%) 8,571	18,364 (88%)
North Western Fijian National	Apisai V. Tora (NFP) Joveci Gavoka (All)	9,689 (56%) 7,622	17,311 (84%)
Vanua Levu North and West Fijian National	Atunaisa N. Maitoga (NFP) Ratu Penaia Ganilau (All)	10,940 (54%) 9,495	20, 435 (87.3%)
Lau Cakaudrove Fijian National	Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara (Alliance) Tevita Vuniwai (FIP)	14,960 (93%) 1,058	16,018 (87.6%)
North Central Fijian National	Ratu Josua B. Toganivalu (All) Ratu Mosese Tuisawau (NFP)	8,702 (51%) 8,444	17, 146 (78%)
Suva East Fijian National	Ratu Edward T.T. Cakobau (All) Veitinia Fotofili (NFP)	7,730 (58%) 5,512	13,242 (78%)
East Central Fijian National	Ratu George K. Cakobau (All) Emosi Lawalevu (FIP)	13,663 (76%) 4,283	17,945 (84.7%)
Nadroga/Navosa Fijian Communal	Peniame D. Naqasima (All) Mesulame G. Nainoca (Ind) Apakuki Sasaroko (NFP)	3,860 (69%) 1,202 545	5,607 (83%)
Ba East Ra Fijian Communal	Malelei Raibe (All) Sairusi Nabogibogi (Ind) Mosese Dakuni A. Vusodamu (FIP) Koresi Matatolu	6,550 (74%) 1,300 504 343 179	8,876 (*6%)
North East Fijian National	Sakeasi Waqanivavalagi (All) Apimeleki Varakula (NFP)	8,569 (54%) 7,403	15,972 (89%)
Ba West Fijian Communal	Ratu Serupepeli U. Naivalu (All)	7,537 (94%)	8,040 (82%)

Communal	Naivalu (All) Josaia Qoro (NFP)	503	
Cakaudrove Fijian Communal	Jone B. Naisara (All) Ratu Glanville W. Lalabalavu (NFP)	8,233 (98%) 157	8,390 (98.6%)
Bua Macuata Fijian Communal	Militoni V. Leweniqila (All) Emosi Vuakatagane Ratu Kavaia Tagivetaua	5,403 (75%) 1,632 161	7196 (90.33%)
Tailevu Fijian Communal	William Toganivalu (All) Kaminieli K. Navatui (FIP) Anasa K. Degei (NFP)	7,176 (97%) 172 88	7,436 (86.5%)
Naitasiri Fijian Communal	Livai N. Nasilivata (All) Ratu Etuate Vitu Qiolevu Ifereimi R. Dau	5,098 (73%) 1,072 812	6,982 (81.48%)
Rewa Serua Namosi Fijian Communal	Sakeasi B. Butadroka (All) Sakiusa Cawaru (FIP)	6,263 (91%) 605	6,868 (79.95%)
Kadavu/Suva city West Fijian Communal	Ratu Seci Nawalowalo (All) Sailosi Raisele Dike B. Qumivutia (NFP) Apete Qereqeretabua Viliame Pawa (FIP)	4,898 (93%) 201 73 53 46	5,271 (82.3%)
Suva City East Fijian Communal	Uraia K. Koroi (All) Taniela Veitata Viliame L. Savu (FIP)	5,624 (90%) 530 125	6,279 (78.15%)
Lomaiviti Rotuma Fijian Communal	Manasa Tabuadua (All) Solomone Momoivalu	2,957 (56%) 2,342	5,299 (83%)
South Central Suva West Fijian National	David Toganivalu (All) Meli S. Baleilakeba (FIP)	13,218 (72%) 4,798	18,324 (82.4%)
South Eastern Fijian National	Adi Losalini Dovi (All) Ro Asela Logavatu (NFP) Ratu Meli Loki	7,023 (43%) 6,903 2,327	16,258 (80.13%)

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*, Vol.99 (4). Jan. 17, 1972: 324-330)

During the 1972 election, the Alliance Party won thirty-three out of the fifty-two seats and the rest went to the NFP. Although the smaller political parties such as the FIP did not win any seats, again what was important was the expression of political dissent in terms of the formation of alternative political parties to counter the dominance of the Alliance. Out of the six parties which contested the 1972 election, five had Fijian candidates.⁹⁴

Table 9: 1972 General Election: Percentage of seats won by each political party

	Alliance	N.F.P.	Others
Fijian Communal	82.60 (12)	2.03*	15.37++
Indian Communal	23.94	74.82 (12)	1.34
General Elector Communal	79.19 (3)	0	20.81
Fijian National	58.59 (7)	39.93 (3)	1.58
Indian National	59.57 (7)	38.82 (3)	1.61
General Elector National	59.54 (4)	26.48 (1)+	13.98

Key: No. of seats won given thus (); * N.F.P. Fielded only six candidates and they all lost their deposits. + N.F.P. fielded only three candidates, of which one was successful: on an average the three polled 44.13% of the votes. ++ F.I.P. obtained 1.69% of these votes

(Source: Ali, A. 1973: 179).⁹⁵

Another crucial political development which emerged in 1972 was that the Alliance lost its monopoly on multiracialism, with Fijians joining the National Federation Party. As can be seen in the table above, Fijians in the National Federation Party secured 2.03% of the Fijian Communal votes and 39.3% of the Fijian National votes. This trend in multi-ethnic alliance was perhaps not as extensive as that expressed by the Alliance Party, which secured 82.60% of the

⁹⁴ *Fiji Royal Gazette*, Vol.99(4). January 17, 1972. Government of Fiji: 206-208.

⁹⁵ Ali, A. 1973. "The Fiji General Election of 1972" in *The Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 8. Oxford University Press: 179..

Fijian Communal votes and 58.59% of the Fijian National votes, however within Fijian society it was an expression of some fundamental long-term and ongoing political development. A number of Fijians including high chiefs who had joined other alternative political parties were not only expressing alternative political views but alternative views of Fijian history. They were not only countering the general policies of the Alliance Party but the orthodoxy upon which the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party was founded. The chiefs involvement in party politics opened an avenue for power rivalry in a new medium. Party politics has provided an avenue for the long-term challenge of chiefly power. Amongst the eastern and northeastern high chiefs who contested the 1972 election through the Alliance Party were the Vunivalu of Bau, Ratu George Cakobau, his cousin Ratu Edward Cakobau, the Tui Nayau and Tui Lau, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara and Ratu Penaia Ganilau of the Ai Sokula clan in Somosomo, Cakaudrove. By openly participating in party politics chiefs were not only accepting open competition through elections as part of modern liberal democracy but were also indirectly inviting challenge from commoner Fijians.

Chapter Summary

Within Fijian society, the introduction of party politics served a number of purposes. On one hand was the party's role as a medium for the extension of liberal democracy and on the other was its link to the past, as an avenue for the expression of alliances, rivalry and dissent. Phase One of Fijian party politics highlighted that alternative Fijian political parties were formed as an expression of dissent against members of the eastern and northeastern chiefly establishment, who in the same period had formed the Fijian Association to continue their political domination. Consequently, the heterogenous nature of Fijian society, and the introduction of party politics provided a window of opportunity for countering such dominance. Between 1960 and 1966, the two western-based political parties of Tora and Nadalo had been formed and merged prior to the 1966 election to challenge the Fijian Association. In 1968 the National Democratic Party merged with the Federation Party to form the National Federation Party. By this time, dissension against the Fijian Association and the Alliance Party had extended to eastern and northeastern Fiji as well, resulting in a number of indigenous Fijians, chiefs included, joining the National Federation Party.

In eastern Fiji, a different political strategy was adopted to counter the power of the Fijian Association and the Alliance Party. The Fiji Independent Party invoked the paramountcy of indigenous rights and promoted right-wing sentiments to promote its political ideology. The FIP was not only challenging the chiefly elites who controlled the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party but equally viewed the presence of non-Fijians in Fiji as problematic. In this context, the evolution of Fijian nationalism in contemporary Fiji, especially its version advocated by the FIP, later adopted by the Fijian Nationalist Party, leaned more towards scapegoating tactics.

The expression of regional cleavages through party politics highlighted the diversity of socio-political realities within Fijian society and the attempt to express these diversities through the modern political system of representation. In the first phase of party politics the Fijian Association had assumed the role as "custodian of the Fijian ethos", adopting the structure and ideology of the Matanitu iTaukei. In the process it inherited inbuilt contradictions within the Matanitu iTaukei, amongst which was the "myth of homogeneity" which was propelled through the ideology of Vanua, Lotu, and Matanitu. Contradictions emerged as the Matanitu iTaukei attempted to balance its role as custodian of the Fijian ethos as well as maintain its commitment in the multiracial arrangement of the Alliance. Internal challenges from within Fijian society in the formation of alternative Fijian political parties, or as experienced prior to the 1972 election, Fijians joining the Indo-Fijian dominated National Federation Party, opened the door widely for political challenge through party politics.

Initially, the egalitarian and individualistic nature of western Fijian vanua was an obstacle to an attempt to challenge the Fijian Association in the early years of party politics. The beginning of a common consciousness of exploitation led to Fijians joining the National Federation Party. The 1972 election provided the largest number of Fijian candidates in the history of the National Federation Party. Both Tora and Nadalo won their seats, paving the way for more Fijians to challenge the Fijian Association and the Alliance Party in later elections. Given the multiracial nature of Fiji's society, happenings in the first phase of

party politics exemplified the inevitability of forming multiracial alliances in Fiji's party politics. While both the Alliance and the National Federation Party had embraced multiracialism in party politics, perhaps the formation of the Fiji Labour Party (FLP) in the second phase of party politics extended the notion further.

Introduction

Fijian political dissent continued into the second phase of party politics with the formation of new political parties. However, some of the issues they addressed were not totally new. Some appeared in the first phase of party politics in one form or another. Such issues provided the link between some Fijian political parties throughout the thirty-nine years under study. Sakeasi Butadroka's Fijian Nationalist Party, for example, was very much a continuation of Viliame Savu's Fiji Independent Party as both parties represented Fijian nationalism. Ratu Osea Gavidi's Western United Front articulated similar western Fijian demands as earlier expressed by the National Democratic Party. Additionally, the impact of global economic policies such as structural adjustment on small island states like Fiji facilitated class consciousness in the formation of multiethnic alliance through the trade unions. The Fiji Labour Party emerged through such circumstances and its formation had a long term impact on Fiji's political development, unveiling the concealment of class through ethnicity, a cornerstone of the Alliance Party's long-term survival.

The formation of Fijian Nationalist Party, the Western United Front and Fiji Labour Party between 1973 and 1987 saw an era of consistent and intensive opposition to the Alliance. Their challenge led to the Alliance suffering two electoral defeats in April 1977 and in April 1987. The first defeat was facilitated by Butadroka's FNP when it secured 20% of Fijian votes during the April 1977 election. However, the Alliance was re-strengthened when it was returned to power for the supposed "unpreparedness" of the National Federation Party to assume leadership role. Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, former Prime Minister and leader of the Alliance, was recalled by the Governor General, Ratu Sir George Cakobau, to lead a care-taker government, consisting mostly of former Alliance members. A second election in September 1977 enabled an Alliance victory. A coalition between the Fiji Labour Party and the National Federation Party brought an end to the twenty-year reign of the Alliance Party from 1967 to 1987.

However, this victory was short-lived when exactly a month after the coalition victory in April 1987, Fiji's first coup d'état was executed by Lieutenant Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka on May 14, 1987. A second coup followed in September of the same year. The Alliance as a political party ended after its defeat at the polls in 1987. However, the orthodoxy upon which the Fijian Association was founded, although indicating signs of fragmentation, was utilized to resurrect the hegemony through another political party, as will be explained in detail in chapter six.

Chapter five discusses the factors which contributed to the formation of alternative Fijian political parties between 1973 and 1987, those involved in party formation and the outcome of elections on the ruling Alliance Party. Within Fijian society as a whole, the narrative of dissent in this chapter traces the gradual fragmentation of an orthodoxy which had evolved in eastern and northeastern Fiji since the early 1800s.

Sakeasi Butadroka's Fijian Nationalist Party

The first challenge in the second phase of Fijian party politics emerged with the formation of the Fijian Nationalist Party in 1974. Its leader, Sakeasi Butadroka of Rewa,¹ had won election on an Alliance Party ticket in 1972 and became an Assistant Minister for Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives in the Alliance government.² Butadroka's personal expectations of the leadership of the Fijian Association and Alliance were frustrated when the business venture he was leading for his province in 1972 failed as a result of both competition from Indo-Fijian business ventures in the same area as well as poor management of the

¹ The provinces of Rewa and Naitasiri, located on central/eastern and south eastern Viti Levu, are the most heavily populated out of the fourteen provinces in Fiji. Suva, Fiji's capital, is located on parts of both provinces and the city sprawls throughout much of the Rewa hinterland. For Rewans, a long-held grievance by some members of the province dated to early in Fijian colonial history when Suva was made the capital in 1882. The Suvavou villagers, for example, were forcibly removed from their original village site, now the site of the Suva botanical gardens, to make way for the city. Their appeal to regain the ownership of their land has been an ongoing battle since 1882. The formation of parties like the FIP and FNP appeals easily to such aggrieved indigenous Fijians. See also Miyazaki, H. 2004. *The Method of Hope: Anthropology, Philosophy, and Fijian Knowledge*. Stanford University Press, California: 1-7.

² See "Minutes of the Proceedings of the House of Representatives, April 1973" in the *Journal of the House of Representatives and of the Senate Meetings of 1973*. Parliament of Fiji, Government Printer, Suva, Fiji: 9.

company.³ During the parliamentary debate at the opening of parliament in 1972, Butadroka explained in detail his frustrated attempt to register his province's business venture through a question which was asked by Mr. K.C. Ramrakha, the Secretary of the opposition National Federation Party. Butadroka explains:

I spoke to some lawyers who were representing some of the bus companies objecting to our application. I came there that morning with a different thought altogether. I thought...that as a Fijian trying to enter the field of commerce, I would be supported by my Indian brothers who were with smiles on their faces. That was a good opportunity when they could walk into that meeting and support one of their brothers who was trying with no experience and very little capital, to enter the field of commerce. But I was surprised at the meeting when I was challenged and I was told that I should not have bought the buses. There are only two bus companies owned by Fijians: the people of Cautata in Tailevu and the second is ours. But the objection that I received and the words that were uttered in that meeting by the Indians (who are both bus operators and lawyers) objecting to one who has no business and legal knowledge or the experience which they possess, was most regrettable. ..Is this the type of citizen that will make Fiji prosper and be an example to other parts of the world? Is this the way that Fijians, who are lagging in all fields of development, are to be helped by their Indian brothers?⁴

Butadroka's dissatisfaction with the Indian business class in the bus service intensified when the Alliance government, more so the ruling chiefly elite in the Fijian Association, seemed indifferent to Fijian economic marginalisation. Like earlier accusations leveled against the Fijian Association by the Fiji Independent Party, Butadroka felt that the Alliance Party was not committed enough to facilitate Fijian business interests. Such experience prompted Butadroka's move in 1973 to work against the Alliance Party during a by-election in the Suva East National Constituency.⁵ A seat was left vacant after the death of Ratu Edward Cakobau and Butadroka worked against his own Alliance Party in a move to endorse a fellow Rewan, Tomasi Vakatora for the seat. This was against a younger and perhaps more qualified Fijian from the island of Koro in the Lomaiviti group, Mosese Qionibaravi, who won the Alliance endorsement

³ In trying to register a bus company belonging to the Rewa Provincial Council in the Rewa and Nausori areas, Butadroka was up against big bus company operators like K.R. Latchan, an Indian Alliance member of parliament. See also *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, The House of Representatives Meeting of May/June, 1972. Parliament of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 188.

⁴ *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, The House of Representatives Meeting of May/June, 1972. Parliament of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 188-189.

⁵ *Fiji Royal Gazette*, Nov. 1973. Government of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 141.

and competed in the election as the Alliance candidate.⁶ However, Butadroka was not the only person from Rewa to protest against the Alliance choice. Political dissent in Rewa was also expressed through Ro Asela Logavatu, a member of the chiefly clan in Lomanikoro, who stood against Mosese Qionibaravi on a National Federation Party ticket. The competition in the by-election was between Logavatu and Qionibaravi and the by-election was narrowly won by Qionibaravi as shown in the table below.⁷

Table 10 : 1973 By-election: Suva East National Constituency

Candidate/Political Party	Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes
Mosese Qionibaravi (Alliance Party)	5,659 (52%)
Ro Asela Logavatu (National Federation Party)	5,274 (48%)
Total Votes Counted	10,933

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*, November, 1973: 649)

Although the Alliance Party won the by-elections, the close contest between Qionibaravi and Logavatu had sown long-term dissatisfaction against the Alliance Party by indigenous Fijian voters in Rewa. The feeling of rejection was exacerbated by the preference given to a non-Rewa person to contest the election on an Alliance Party ticket. This feeling of rejection was used by Sakeasi Butadroka as proof of the insensitivity in the leadership of the Alliance Party, specifically the leaders of the Fijian Association, towards indigenous Fijian political aspirations in their own vanua. Since a large part of Suva belongs to Rewa and modern electoral boundaries are demarcated above the foundation of the vanua, in Fijian political thinking, the dissension articulated by Butadroka had deeper implications. The decision to let a non-Rewa person to stand in Rewa was a breach of Fijian protocol of acknowledging and respecting the independence of a vanua and its people. In pre-European Fiji, the act was

⁶ Interview with Tomasi Vakatora. August 23, 2002. Suva, Fiji. See also Norton, R. 1990. *Race and Politics in Fiji* (2nd Ed). University of Queensland:111-115.

⁷ Under the electoral system of the 1970 Constitution, the province of Rewa was in the boundary of Suva East National Constituency.

tantamount to usurping power and would have resulted in warfare. Rewans would have viewed this as a case of another islander exhibiting political ambition on Viti Levu. Butadroka's and Rewan dissension shows the complexity of politics within Fijian society as in most cases traditional political protocols are expected to be observed in the arena of modern party politics.

Butadroka's lament found fertile ground amongst members of the Fiji Independent Party who had earlier blamed the chiefs in the Fijian Association for ignoring the plight of Fijian masses. Members of the Fiji Independent Party were attracted to Butadroka's Fijian nationalist sentiments and forthright political style. In fact Butadroka's nationalist ideology was very similar to, if not just the same as that of the Fiji Independent Party's. In a political campaign, Butadroka stated:

I will start off by saying that we in the Fijian Nationalist Party do not believe and do not agree with the type of government we now have in Fiji, where all races have a say. We are earnestly praying to God that the time when Fijians only will be in Parliament may quickly come. This is exactly what happened in India, in Papua New Guinea and in Vanuatu, where the indigenous people took over from the British, the Australians and the French.⁸

The Nationalists' protest against the Alliance Party was interwoven with their equating Fijian economic marginalisation with the presence of other races in Fiji. Premdas explains that according to the Nationalists, the presence of alien races in Fiji threatened the Fijian way of life and consequently made a mockery of the doctrine of Fijian paramountcy which the Fijian Association represented.⁹ The political propaganda gained momentum mostly amongst grassroot rural supporters in the provinces of Rewa, Tailevu, Naitasiri, Serua, Namosi and the marginalized groups in the urban areas between Nausori and Navua. By the April 1977 general election, the FNP's political propaganda had gained enough grassroot sympathizers within Fijian society, causing defeat to the AP and the long-term fragmentation of the orthodoxy upon which the FA was founded. The outcome of this general election resulted in the National Federation Party winning twenty-six seats; the Alliance Party with twenty-four seats; the Fijian Nationalist Party had one seat and Ratu Osea Gavidi won a seat as an

⁸ Sakeasi Butadroka's Campaign Speech. Taken from Professor Brij Lal's personal library, Australian National University, Canberra.

⁹ Premdas, R. R. 1980. "Constitutional Challenge: The Rise of Fijian Nationalism" in *Pacific Perspective*, Vol. 9 (2). South Pacific Social Science Association, Suva, Fiji: 43.

independent candidate. Although the Fijian Nationalist Party won only one seat, it had attracted 20 per cent of the Fijian communal vote and in the process fragmented the Fijian political power base of the Alliance Party. Consequently it also affected the fate of the Alliance Party in the national seats where cross voting took place.¹⁰ The table below shows the results of the April 1977 general election in the Fijian Communal and National constituencies.

Table 11: April 1977 General Election: Fijian Communal and National Constituencies

Constituency	Winning Candidate – political party	Number of winning votes and percentage of Votes	Total Number of votes/Percentage of voters who polled
Bua/Macuata Fijian Communal	Militoni Leweniqila (AP)	7,132	8,199 (76.64%)
Cakaudrove Fijian Communal	Jone B. Naisara (AP)	Not available	Not available
Lau/Rotuma Fijian Communal	Jonati Mavoia (AP)	Not available	Not available
Tailevu Fijian Communal	William Toganivalu (AP)	6,093	8,347 (81.1%)
Naitasiri Fijian Communal	Livai Nasilivata (AP)	4,498	7,078 (72.28%)
Rewa/Serua/Namosi Fijian Communal	Sakeasi B. Butadroka (FNP)	4,640	8,684 (69.1%)
Kadavu/Tamavua and Suva Suburban	Ratu Seci Nawalowalo (AP)	5,687	9,459 (65.77%)
Lomaiviti/Muanikau	Solomone Momoivalu (AP)	6,763	7,113 (75%)
Ra/Samabula and Suva Fijian Communal	Jone Banuve (AP)	4,621	7,552 (69%)
Nadroga/Navosa Communal	Ratu Osea Gavidu (Independent)	3,709	7,167 (75%)
Ba/Nadi Fijian Communal	Ratu Napolioni Dawai (AP)	6,328	8,955 (73%)
Vuda/Yasawa Fijian	Ratu Josaia	5,449	7,817 (71%)

¹⁰ See also *Fiji Royal Gazette*, April 12, 1977. Government of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 347 – 364; see also Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese. 1997. *The Pacific Way: A Memoir*. University of Hawaii, Honolulu: 132 – 133.

Communal	Tavaia (AP)		
Fijian	National	Constituencies	
Vanua Levu North and West Fijian National	Atunaisa Maitoga (NFP)	13,272	24,170 (75.96%)
Lau/Cakaudrove/Rotuma			
South Central/Suva West Fijian National	Ratu David Toganivalu (AP)	9,611	17,506 (67.86%)
Suva East Fijian National	Mosese Qionibaravi (AP)	8,233	17,953 (65.69%)
South Eastern Fijian National	Ro Asela Logavatu (NFP)	8,726	20,759 (70.4%)
East Central Fijian National	Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau (AP)	12,347	20,095 (78.6%)
North Eastern Fijian National	Timoci Naco (NFP)	10,018	19,836 (80%)
North Central Fijian National	Sakeo Tuiwainikai (FNP)	11,886	21,279 (80%)
North Western Fijian National	Apisai Tora (NFP)	12,714	20,702 (76%)
South Western Fijian National	Isikeli Nadalo (NFP)	12,239	22,004 (78%)

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*, 12 April, 1977: 347-364) ¹¹

In the election of April 1977, the Alliance Party control of Fijian seats was further eroded when it lost seven Fijian seats, five more than 1972, to rival Fijian candidates who either stood as independents or as candidates of other political parties. These included Ratu Osea Gavidu (an Independent member for the Nadroga/Navosa Fijian Communal Constituency), Apisai Tora (NFP – North Western Fijian National), Isikeli Nadalo (NFP – South Western Fijian National), Ro Asela Logavatu (NFP – South East Fijian National), Timoci Naco (NFP – North Eastern Fijian National), Sakeasi Butadroka (FNP – Rewa/Serua/Namosi Fijian Communal) and Atunaisa Maitoga (NFP – Vanua Levu North and West Fijian National). It was evident from the April 1977 election results, that Fijian dissatisfaction and dissent against the Fijian Association arm of the AP became a reality, causing its first defeat at the polls. The election also highlighted that party politics enabled Fijians in different regions of Fiji to determine which

¹¹ *Fiji Royal Gazette*, 12 April, 1977. Government Printer, Suva, Fiji: 347-364.

parties to join and in the process weakened the paramountcy claim by the Fijian Association to be the legitimate political representative of all Fijians.

The Aftermath of the April 1977 General Elections

Dramatic actions occurred after the defeat of the Alliance Party by the National Federation Party. After their election victory, the National Federation Party members were split in their choice for a Prime Minister. When a leader was not chosen in the allocated time, the Governor General, Ratu Sir George Cakobau, the Vunivalu of Bau and once a Minister in the Alliance Government, took action in appointing a caretaker government. The "unpreparedness" of the National Federation party led to the recall of Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara to lead a caretaker government until another election was called later in the year.

There are a number of explanations of the April 1977 political impasse. Lal explains that prior to the April 1977 general election:

The National Federation Party had recently shown itself divided on policies and personalities, and there was the distinct possibility that the party might self-destruct over the selection of candidates.¹²

This pre-election conflict perhaps contributed directly to the dilemma in the choice of a leader after the general election. Another explanation of the internal conflict within the NFP was the conflict which arose from religious differences. Hindus and Muslims could not agree on a common leader. Apisai Tora, a former member of the National Federation Party explained:

When we won the first elections of 1977, it took us four days to decide who was going to be Prime Minister. I will tell you one very emotional experience. Mr. Koya won the approval of the NFP when the election was over and was assured that automatically he would become Prime Minister, but then I got a shock when I found out that we had to have a vote. There were 26 of us and I thought that it became a religious issue. I was told by one Indian candidate who won his seat, "look, you are not going to vote for S.M. Koya", I asked, "Why not?". He said, "Well, you know, Muslims and Hindus have not always united with each other".¹³

Tora explained that voting took place twice and in the first one there was a tie, thirteen to thirteen, between Jai Ram Reddy and S.M. Koya. In the second vote, Koya led by fourteen votes, however, by the time the newly elected team of

¹² Lal, B.V. 1992. *Broken Waves: A History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century*. University of Hawaii, Honolulu: 238.

¹³ Interview with Senator Apisai Tora. June 5, 2002. Natalau Village, Sabeto, Ba Province.

Ministers were ready to go for the swearing-in ceremony, it was too late since the Governor General had called for a caretaker government.¹⁴

The theory of "unpreparedness" opened another window of opportunity for the Fijian Association and the Alliance Party for yet another term in office, providing a convenient opportunity by the ruling elites to control power once again. Within Fijian society, certain factions regarded the Alliance Party's electoral defeat as a loss for all indigenous Fijians in terms of power control. It became the center of propaganda for the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party as the politics of "fear of the unknown" spread swiftly. Fijians were reminded by their leaders, especially those in eastern Fiji, that the "vulagi"¹⁵ were going to make them strangers in the land of their forefathers if they did not unite under one political party. In this context, what was implied was unity under the Fijian Association. This would continue the dominance of the group whose interests were protected by the eastern and northeastern Fijian orthodoxy.

As part of the attempt to re-build confidence in the Fijian Association, a task force was established to visit all vanua in Fiji traditionally. There are approximately one hundred and eighty nine vanua throughout Fiji.¹⁶ A traditional approach was made to vanua chiefs to re-strengthen their link to the Fijian Association. Savu explains:

Me sa lako e dua na ilakolako vakavanua vakaiTaukei ki na veitikotiko vakaturaga kece e Viti. Ke vaka era na veitokoni tale ki na Alliance, ni sa na qaqā ena veidigidigi, e sa na biu laivi na matanitu ni Alliance, ka sa na tauyavu ga na matanitu vou ena Fijian Association.¹⁷

A traditional delegation was to visit all vanua in Fiji. If Fijians would support the Alliance party again in the next elections, then there would be a break with the Alliance party and the Fijian Association arm of the party would form a government on its own.

The use of custom to strengthen the Fijian Association had an impact on indigenous Fijian voters, for in the September General Election, the Alliance

¹⁴ Interview with Senator Apisai Tora. June 5, 2002. Natalau Village, Sabeto, Ba Province. Tora was a member of the National Federation Party between 1968 and 1977.

¹⁵ "Vulagi" refers to visitors and in this context refers to non-indigenous Fijians.

¹⁶ See Seruvakula, S.B. 2000. *Bula Vakavanua*. Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji: 130-162.

¹⁷ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

Party regained its Fijian support. Some seats which the Alliance Party had previously lost were regained in the second round of election. In others, where the Alliance Party had won but with smaller margin, more votes were gained in the second round of election. The table below shows the results of the September 1977 election in the Fijian Communal and National Constituencies.

Table 12: September 1977 General Election: Fijian Communal and National Constituencies

Constituencies	Winning Candidate – political party	Number of winning votes/Percentage	Total Number of Votes/ Percentage of registered voters who polled
Bua/Macuata Fijian Communal	Militoni Leweniqila (AP)	8,119 (96%)	8,483 (74.37%)
Cakaudrove Fijian Communal	Jone Naisara (AP)	9,544 (98%)	9,785 (74.1%)
Lau/Rotuma Fijian Communal	Jonati Mavoia (AP)		
Tailevu Fijian Communal	William Toganivalu (AP)	7,337 (85%)	8,612 (77.44%)
Naitasiri Fijian Communal	Livai Nasilivata (AP)	6,365 (84%)	7,583 (69.60%)
Rewa/Serua/Namosi Fijian Communal	Tomasi Vakatora (AP)	5,231 (60%)	8,743 (66.79%)
Kadavu/Tamavua/Suva Suburban Fijian Communal	Ratu Seci Nawalowalo (AP)	7,452 (82%)	9,083 (64.96%)
Lomaiviti/Muanikau Fijian Communal	Solomone Momoivalu (AP)	7,338 (93%)	7,888 (74%)
Ra/Samabula and Suva Fijian Communal	Jone Banuve (AP)	5,536 (75%)	7,398 (65.5%)
Nadroga/Navosa Fijian Communal	Ratu Osea Gavidu (Independent)	3,799 (51%)	7,506
Ba/Nadi Fijian Communal	Ratu Napolioni Dawai (AP)	8,101 (89%)	9,114 (72.7%)
Vuda/Yasawa Fijian Communal	Ratu Josaia Tavaia (AP)	7,013 (85%)	8,262 (66.2%)
Fijian	National	Constituencies	
Vanua Levu North and West Fijian National	Ratu Josefa Iloilo (AP)	10,362 (43%)	24,112 (70.61%)
Lau/Cakaudrove/Rotuma Fijian National	Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara (AP)	Unopposed	

South Central/Suva West Fijian National	Ratu David Toganivalu (AP)	12,332 (74%)	16,766 (66.87%)
Suva East Fijian National	Mosese Qionibaravi (AP)	9,552 (52%)	18,438 (64.4%)
South Eastern Fijian National	Semesa Sikivou (AP)	10,133 (54%)	18,866 (66.76%)
East Central Fijian National	Ratu Penaia Ganilau (AP)	14,236 (86%)	16,611 (74.46%)
North Eastern Fijian National	Sakeasi Waqanivavalagi (AP)	10,864 (60%)	18,109 (78.9%)
North Central Fijian National	Ratu Serupepeli Naivalu (AP)	8,225 (39%)	21,246 (77.6%)
North Western Fijian National	Ratu Julian Toganivalu (AP)	8,497 (37%)	23,113 (75.2%)
South Western Fijian National	Isikeli Nadalo (NFP)	10,542 (52%)	20,255 (74.57%)

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*, 31 October, 1977: 855-874) ¹⁸

The results of the September 1977 election indicated another victory for the Fijian Association when it regained five out of the seven Fijian seats it lost in April 1977. Additionally, the Alliance Party’s narrow margin in some constituencies like in the Naitasiri Fijian communal constituency was widened when the party gained more Fijian votes. The table below shows a comparison between the first and second round of elections in 1977 in the Naitasiri Fijian Communal Constituency.

Table13: 1977 General Elections: Naitasiri Fijian Communal Constituency

Constituency	Candidate/Political Party	April 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes	September 1977 General election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes
Naitasiri Fijian Communal	Livai Nasilivata (AP)	4,496 (64%)	6,365 (84%)
	Ratu Kiniviliame Raicebe (FNP)	2,580 (36%)	
	Suliasi T. Devo (FNP)		1,218 (16%)
Total votes counted		7,076	7,583

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*. April 1977: 348 and November 1977: 858)

¹⁸ *Fiji Royal Gazette*, 31 October, 1977. Government of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 855-874.

The outcome of the two general elections not only increased the winning margin for the Alliance Party but also showed that smaller parties fielded two different candidates in the two elections as seen in the table above. Apart from the traditional approach strategy which the Fijian Association used, financial constraints to fund campaigns could have been a possible factor in the change of candidates for the smaller parties.

Another trend which emerged in the 1977 general elections was that in a number of constituencies where the Alliance Party lost in the first election, the party had a clear victory in the second election. Additionally, in the second round new candidates stood in the election, causing a split in the votes and consequently enabling the Alliance Party candidate victory. In the Vanua Levu North and West Fijian National Constituency, Maitoga of the NFP lost to the AP candidate, Ratu Josefa Iloilo, currently the President of the Republic of Fiji, in the second election after the entry of two new candidates. A possible factor to Maitoga's defeat in the September election was the split in the National Federation Party between the Flower and the Dove factions. The table below shows such trend in the Vanua Levu North and West Fijian National Constituency.

Table 14: 1977 General Election: Vanua Levu North and West Fijian National Constituency

Constituency	Candidate	April 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes	September 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes
Vanua Levu North and West Fijian National	Atunaisa Maitoga (NFP)	13,272 (55%)	8,421 (35%)
	Ratu Josefa Iloilo (AP)	9,954 (41%)	10,362 (43%)
	Vunibola	944 (4%)	
	Gabirieli N. Lutua		292 (1%)
	Tevita N. Vuniwai		5,037 (21%)
Total votes counted		24,170	24,112

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*, April 1977: 356 and November 1977: 867)

In the Viti Levu constituencies, a number of Fijian candidates including the leader of the Fijian Nationalist Party, Sakeasi Butadroka, lost the September 1977 general election as shown in the table below.

Table 15: 1977 General Election: Rewa/Serua/Namosi Fijian Communal Constituency

Constituency	Candidate/Political Party	April 1977 General Election Number of Winning/Percentage of winning votes	September 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes
Rewa/Serua/Namosi Fijian Communal Constituency	Sakeasi Butadroka (FNP)	4,640 (53%)	3,512 (40%)
	Tomasi R. Vakatora (AP)	4,044 (47%)	5,231 (60%)
Total Votes Counted		8,684	8,743

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*, April 1977: 354 and November 1977: 857)

In another constituency in south-eastern Viti Levu, which included the province of Rewa, the September 1977 election saw the victory of the Alliance candidate who was defeated in the April 1977 election. The table below shows the 1977 general elections results for the South/Eastern Fijian National constituency.

Table 16: 1977 General Election: South/Eastern Fijian National Constituency

Constituency	Candidate/Political Party	April 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes	September 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes
South Eastern Fijian National	Ro Asela Logavatu (NFP)	8,726 (42%)	6,032 (32%)
	Semesa K. Sikivou (AP)	7,450 (36%)	10,133 (54%)
	Jone Kama (FNP)	4,493 (22%)	2,701 (4%)
Total Votes Counted		20,759	18,866

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*, April 1977: 350 and November 1977: 861)

The political strategy which was used by the Alliance Party in some constituencies in western Viti Levu during the second election of 1977 was slightly different from the April 1977 election. This enabled their victory in the September election. In the North-Central Fijian National Constituency, which covered part of western Viti Levu, Ratu Julian Toganivalu, an eastern Fijian chief, was replaced by Ratu Serupepeli Naivalu, a western Fijian chief. Naivalu secured victory from the previous winner, Tuiwainikai of the Fijian Nationalist Party. In the September election, Tuiwainikai lost a large proportion of his votes to two new candidates from western Viti Levu, Kaliova Vakabua and Manueli Nawalu. The table below shows the 1977 general elections results for the North-Central Fijian National Constituency.

Table 17 : 1977 General Election: North-Central Fijian National Constituency

Constituency	Name of Candidate/Political Party	April 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes	September 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes
North Central Fijian National	Sakeo Tuiwainikai (FNP)	11,886 (56%)	5,153 (24%)
	Josua B. Toganivalu (AP)	8,054 (38%)	
	Iona N. Walisoliso	1,339 (6%)	
	Ratu Serupepeli U. Naivalu (AP)		8,225 (39%)
	Kaliova Vakabua		7,326 (34%)
	Manueli K. Nawalu		542 (3%)
Total votes counted		21,279	21,246

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*, April 1977: 359 and November 1977: 874)

Still in western Viti Levu, veteran politician Apisai Tora lost the second general election of 1977 to the new Alliance candidate, Josua Toganivalu. Again, the entry of another western Fijian candidate, General Secretary of the Mine Workers Union, Navitalai Raqona, contributed to Tora's defeat as shown in the table below.

Table 18: 1977 General Election: North Western Fijian National Constituency

Constituency	Candidate/Political Party	April 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes	September 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/ Percentage of winning votes
	Apisai V. Tora (NFP)	12,714 (61%)	6,381 (28%)
	Luke Vakayadra (AP)	7,988 (39%)	
	Josua B. Toganivalu (AP)		8,497 (37%)
	Navitalai Raqona		7,486 (32%)
	Iona N. Walisoliso		749 (3%)
Total votes counted		20,702	23,113

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*. April 12, 1977: 359 and November 1977: 872)

Tora's defeat in the September general election was to close a chapter in his political career which began in 1960. In 1978 he officially resigned from the National Federation Party, perhaps after realizing not only the arduous task of trying to defeat a powerful eastern-based Fijian political party but also after discovering a new political strategy of "joining the enemies" on the other side of the political divide. By 1982 Tora was a member of the Alliance Party, and competed in the election under his new party. Two other western Fijian politicians, Ratu Osea Gavidu and Isikeli Nadalo both of the province of Nadroga/Navosa won their seats in the two general elections of 1977. Unlike Tora, none of them joined any eastern-based political party throughout their political career. Nadalo defeated high chief from Navosa, Ratu Aseri Qoro Latianara,¹⁹ in both elections as shown in the table below.

¹⁹ The late Ratu Aseri Qoro Latianara, high chief of Navosa, was the father of the late Adi Kuini Vuikaba Speed, who later became the leader of the Fiji Labour Party after the death of her husband Dr. Timoci Bavadra, and leader of the Fijian Association Party, after the death of its founder, Josevata Kamikamica.

Table 19: 1977 General Election: South-Western Fijian National Constituency

Constituency	Candidate/Political Party	April 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes	September 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes
South Western Fijian National	Isikeli Nadalo (NFP)	12,239 (56%)	10,542 (52%)
	Ratu Aseri Q.Latianara (AP)	8,047 (37%)	9,713 (48%)
	Joseva R.Vucago	1,391 (6%)	
	Aminio Qalovaki	327 (1%)	
Total Votes counted		22,004	20,255

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*. April 1977: 360 and November 1977: 872)

On the whole, as indicated by the September 1977 election results, the Alliance Party managed to recapture Fijian votes. This could have been a direct result of the political strategy of creating a Bose Vanua.²⁰ However, the Alliance Party confronted more challenges with the formation of two more alternative political parties, Western United Front in 1981 and the Fiji Labour Party in 1985. The Fijian Association's promise to dissenting supporters to form a government of its own after the September 1977 general election was never fulfilled. This unfulfilled promise later proved costly to the Alliance and its Fijian Association arm.²¹

Since Fijian party politics have been driven by the dynamics of ancient alliances, rivalries and dissent, power was therefore ephemeral in nature, reflecting the subtleties of rivalries between vanua, matanitu and regions, as social groups within these boundaries converge or compete for power control. After the elections of 1977, it was evident that the Fijian Association was seriously challenged by the Fijian Nationalists. The Fijian Association's image of protecting the paramountcy of indigenous Fijian rights sounded hollow and no longer sacrosanct to Fijian voters. What the Fijian grassroots voter looked for in April 1977 was political pragmatism; the implementation of policies to positively impact on resource owners. Butadroka's promises, or at least his political propaganda, incited a political re-awakening or political consciousness amongst

²⁰ This is a village council which was created specifically after the first electoral defeat of the Alliance Party. It was to be a forum for airing Alliance propaganda and where the Alliance could learn about the thinking of grassroot Fijians.

²¹ Interview with Viliame Savu. October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

grassroot Fijian voters. This sentiment was succinctly expressed by Ratu Osea Gavidi in parliament when he argued that:

Politicians in the next general elections ...will face two completely new sets of voters. The voters of 1977 who are now five years older and are also five years maturer and the new voters who are politically more educated, more forthright and more hungry than those in 1977. These two sets of voters, will not stand any more nonsense nor any cheap politicking from anyone.²²

As contradictions further unfolded and dissent gathered momentum, the re-organization of the Fijian Association thereafter was only for short-term political survival such as winning the 1982 general election. The defeat and re-election of the Alliance Party demonstrated the complex roles of the Fijian Association. On the one hand it was attempting to portray an image of multiracialism and on the other, struggling to unite Fijian voters through the "politics of fear". However, opponents of the party, especially the Fijian Nationalists, had weakened the Fijian Association claim as the legitimate political representative of all Fijians. Additionally, the Nationalists used the occasion to propagate and promote the view that Fijians had already shown their dissatisfaction with the Fijian Association through the polls. They asserted that chiefs in the Fijian Association were not genuine in their rhetoric as true representatives of indigenous Fijians since they compromised Fijian rights during the pre-independence constitutional conferences in London. In this context, they rightly deserved to lose the April 1977 election. Additionally, the nationalists argued that the election defeat indicated that the 1970 constitution could not protect the rights of indigenous Fijians to lead in their own land. From this perspective, the 1970 constitution had to be thrown out.²³ On the whole, the loss of the Alliance Party pushed the Nationalist group further to the right of the political spectrum.

A significant political development which occurred after April 1977 was the strategy used by the FA to woo Fijian voters back into the fold. Again, the Matanitu iTaukei or Fijian Administration was utilized for the purpose. This involved the creation of the "Bose Vanua" as a facilitator and link between those in the top echelons of the Fijian Administration and the grassroot voters in the villages. However, the Bose Vanua was just another forum which became

²² Debate on Development Plan 8 by Ratu Osea Gavidi, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, The House of Representatives Meeting of May/June 1981. Parliament of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 362.

²³ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

defunct after a while. Savu argues that the Bose Vanua was created specifically by the Ministry of Fijian Affairs as a grassroot power base for the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party.²⁴

The nationalist challenge was taken to a higher level with the formation of yet another Fijian political party which was formed to address the grievance of pine landowners against the Alliance Party's policy on the development of the pine industry. If the nationalists dissent was broader in scope, that of the Western United Front was specific.

Resource Development and the Formation of the "Western United Front" (WUF)

Between 1954 and 1968 research into the development of the pine industry in Fiji was undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) through the Department of Forestry. It was discovered that the species of *Pinus Caribbea* thrived under Fiji's climatic conditions and based on this research, government formulated its policy on the development of the pine industry in the early 1970s.²⁵ The Alliance Government's bill on the development of the pine industry was tabled in parliament by Ratu Josua Toganivalu, then Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests.

He explained:

Past practice for forestry development on Fijian land was for government to lease extensive areas and plant it for its own eventual profit. However, it became increasingly obvious that landowners were not happy being merely the providers of land for someone else, even Government, to exploit and reap the benefits. They wanted and rightly so, a more equitable share of the profits from the operations on their land as well as being more closely involved in the development process themselves. Government therefore, took this opportunity to embark on a novel form of land development whereby a partnership was set up involving the landowners and government. Each partner would both contribute to and benefit from the development programme...Government has accepted that its involvement in pine development should not have, as its sole objective, to generate direct revenue through profit. Its philosophy and involvement will aim at stimulating the economy as a whole and the rural economy in particular, imposing employment opportunities, rural attractiveness and affecting income redistribution.²⁶

²⁴ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

²⁵ See *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, The House of Representatives Meeting of February 1976. Parliament of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 78.

²⁶ *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, The House of Representatives Meeting of February 1976. Parliament of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 78.

Government's Sixth Development Plan (1971-1975) introduced several important policy changes which were derived from the recommendations of the Food and Agriculture Organisation. The FAO recommendations for forestry development in Fiji since 1972 formed the backbone for forestry policy in Fiji's Sixth Development Plan (1971-1975) and Seventh Development Plan (1976-1980). Through the FAO's recommendations and ensuing government policy, the Alliance government had accepted and proposed to establish extensive areas of pine plantation. This was to cater for a major export industry for wood chips and or pulp and timber.²⁷ Fiji's Seventh Development Plan stated that:

The Pine Scheme was established in 1972 with an immediate target of 50,000 acres (20,000 hectares) of *Pinus caribaea* by 1978... The initial, FAO-proposed forest estate of 134,000 planted acres (54,000 hectares) has now been revised to an expanded scheme with 186,000 acres (75,000 hectares) of pine... Landowners in particular will be given special assistance so that the benefits of the development of their forest accrue to them.²⁸

By the early 1970s a loan from the Commonwealth Development Corporation was already secured and specific areas on the two main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu were earmarked for the project. These included Nabou in Nadroga/Navosa, Drasa/Lololo and Nadarivatu in the province of Ba, and Ra, all of which are western Viti Levu provinces. On Vanua Levu the province of Bua and Seaqaqa in Macuata were identified.²⁹ **(See map on 1975 pine growing areas).**

Despite the government's promise to involve landowners, they were to have a minor role only, as the government already had its own plan for the development of the pine industry. What the landowners initially envisaged in terms of part ownership of the industry did not correlate with government's notion of such a business deal and plan.³⁰ Proposals were opened to prospective companies for pine harvesting and for the development of an export industry. Companies which sent in proposals included British Petroleum (South

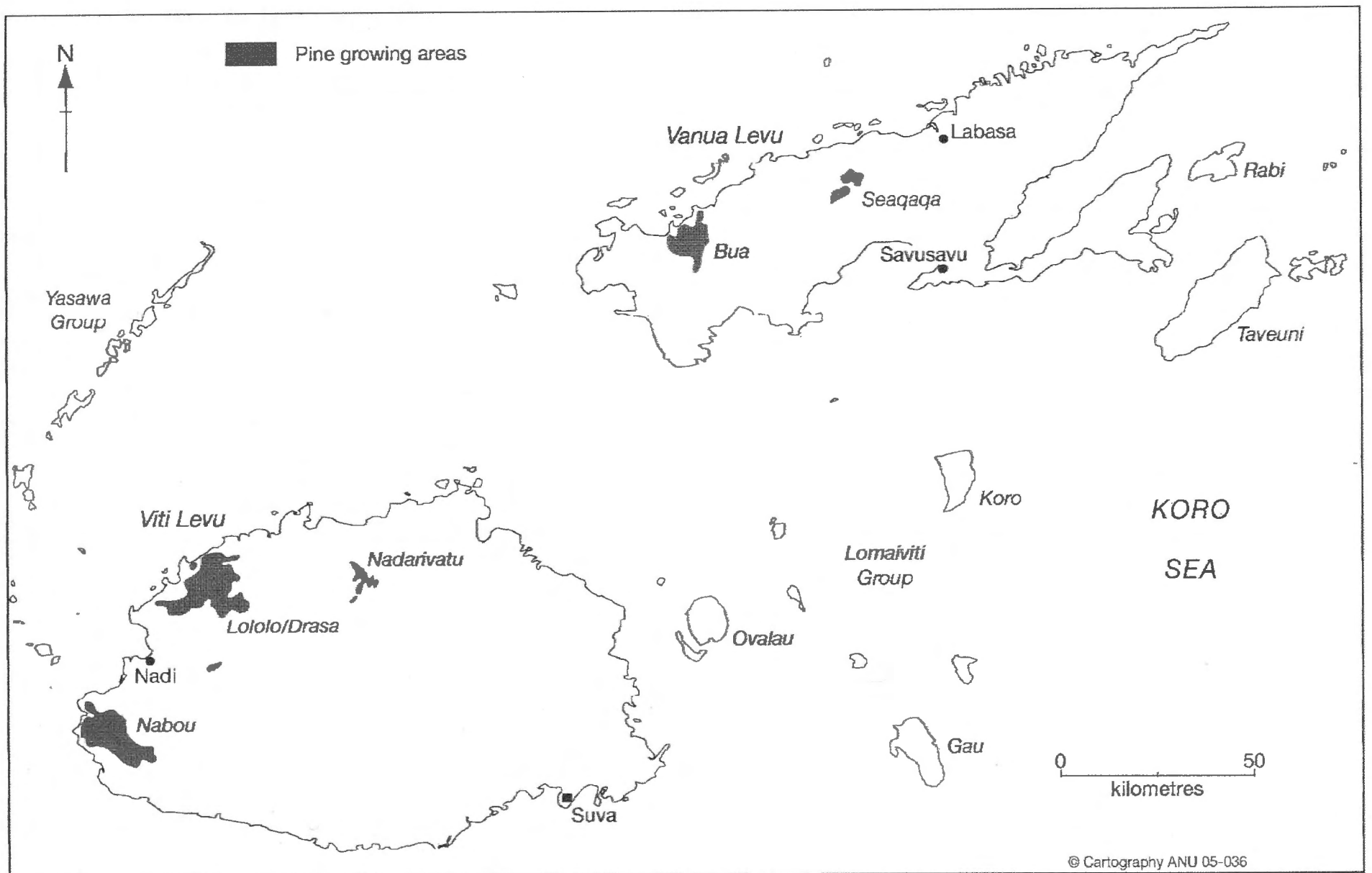
²⁷ *Fiji's Seventh Development Plan (1976-1980)*. Central planning Office, Suva, Fiji: 98.

²⁸ *Fiji's Seventh Development Plan (1976-1980)*: 98-99.

²⁹ See *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, The House of Representatives Meeting of February 1976. Parliament of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 78-79.

³⁰ See "Policy Objectives in *Fiji's Seventh Development Plan (1976-1980)*: 98-99.

1975 PINE GROWING AREAS



(i) Pine Growing Areas in Western Viti Levu

. Nabou . Lololo . Drasa . Nadarivatu

(ii) Pine Growing Areas in Vanua Levu

. Bua . Seaqaqa

West Pacific Ltd.), M.K. Hunt Foundation (New Zealand), Shell/NewZealand Forest Products, and United Marketing Corporation (a U.S. Company).³¹

In the province of Nadroga/Navosa, the Alliance government's desire to lease the "talasiga"³² land in Nabou for the pine scheme established the relationship between government, landowners and the landowners' representative, Ratu Osea Gavidi.³³ Initially, when the landowners were approached by government in the late 1950s and early 1970s to lease their land, they were reluctant to do so, the main reason being the low rentals they received from leased land in the past.³⁴ Land on which pine was planted was rented at fifty cents per acre and ten cents per annum for unplanted land. New land had a premium payment of one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre.³⁵ Added to this was the unequal land rental distribution formula adopted by the NLTB as shown in the table below.

Table 20: Distribution of the NLTB Land Rental Income

NLTB Share (Management Purposes)	Head of Vanua (Turaga iTaukei or iliuliu ni Vanua)	Head of Yavusa or clan (Turaga iliuliu ni Yavusa)	Head of Mataqali or sub-clan (Turaga iliuliu ni Mataqali)	Ordinary Mataqali or sub- clan members
25%	5%	10%	15%	45%

(Source: *NLTB Induction Booklet*, 1995: 19)

The table shows that the NLTB takes 25% of the money for management purposes; the head of the vanua receives 5%; head of the yavusa receives 10%; head of the mataqali receives 15%; and the many ordinary members of

³¹ See also Lal, B.V. 1992: 246.

³² Talasiga refers to grassland.

³³ Interview with Raru Osea Gavidi, 19 May, 2004. Suva, Fiji. Ratu Osea Gavidi, a high chief of Cuvu in the province of Nadroga/Navosa was a kinsman of the landowners. He has professional qualifications in Forestry and was the Divisional Forestry Officer Western in the early 1970s.

³⁴ See *Parliamentary Paper No.22 of 1971*. "Forestry Department Annual Report for the Year 1970". Parliament of Fiji: 1. See also Durutalo, S. 1985. *Internal Colonialism and Uneven Development: The Case of Western Viti Levu*. M.A. Thesis. The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji: 421.

³⁵ See *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, The house of Representatives Meeting of February 1976. Parliament of Fiji, Suva, Fiji: 78.

the mataqali share the remaining 45% of land rental money.³⁶ In reality, the Turaga iTaukei or iliuliu ni Vanua end up receiving the highest percentage of share since normally, within the Fijian social structure, the Turaga iTaukei or Turaga ni Vanua (Head of Vanua), is also head of the Yavusa (clan) and Mataqali (sub-clan). In monetary terms this meant that one person receive 30% of the land rental money while the majority share the remaining 45%. It is this situation which has caused a lot of serious re-thinking amongst indigenous Fijian landowners, especially those whose lands are leased out. In such a situation people would rather maintain their land than lease it out.

From the early 1970s, Gavidi solicited the Alliance Government on behalf of the Nabou pine landowners for their inclusion in the government's plan to develop the pine industry in Fiji. Gavidi and the pine landowners favoured the United Marketing Corporation, whose proposal had a fifty-fifty shareholding arrangement they considered beneficial in the long term.³⁷ However, the Fiji Pine Commission favoured and accepted the British Petroleum proposal. This culminated in a conflict between the Nabou landowners and the government.

In the early part of negotiations for land lease, Gavidi had outlined to the government the social significance of involving landowners in native land development. He highlighted that since landowners lived off the land in their everyday subsistence, any extensive project on their land would have a great impact on their established social structure. The impact could be negative if landowners were not substantially involved in any land development project. Additionally, Gavidi argued that while government's priority was profit-making, government should not forget that to the Fijian landowners, the social value of their land often surpassed its monetary value since their livelihood depended on the land.³⁸

The idea which was proposed by Gavidi, the "Fiji Pine Incorporation" or "Fijian Incorporation" was a business concept which was derived from a model by the Maori Land Incorporation of Aotearoa (New Zealand). Its Fiji version would have

³⁶ *Native Lands Trust Board*. 1995. Induction Booklet. Native Land Trust Board Human Resources Department, Suva, Fiji: 19.

³⁷ See also Durutalo, S. 1985: 422. See also Lal, B. V. 1992: 246.

³⁸ See also Durutalo, S. 1985: 422.

been an integrated enterprise involving government, the Native Land Trust Board and the landowners. The landowners in the pine growing-areas of Uto, Vunamoli, Lomawai and Tau, in the Nadi, Nabou, Nadroga and Navosa areas in western Viti Levu were willing to consolidate their individual landholdings for the enterprise. The inbuilt concept within the Fijian Incorporation was the amalgamation of the traditional structure of land ownership in a modern capitalistic business venture, where commercial expertise and finance were the guiding principles. The main land use that was planned by this amalgamation was pine re-afforestation with subsidiary enterprises to either supplement or complement the main pine effort. Later, it was planned that subsequent processing and marketing of forest products would have been generated from this venture. While the long-term crop was being nurtured over the years, subsidiary bodies to take care of other land use forms, such as cattle farming, were to be established in order to maximize productivity and to generate employment and extra income for landowners.³⁹

Government's refusal to involve landowners as part owners of the pine venture resulted in various forms of confrontation between government and landowners from the early 1970s. Roadblocks were a commonly used strategy for protest by landowners. By 1972 conflicts surrounding the development of the Pine industry had erupted between Gavidu, as representative of the landowners, Winston Thompson and Ewen Gregor, the representative of the state and the Fiji Pine Scheme respectively. Durutalo explains that:

The clash of personalities served as a superficial appearance to the underlying and more deeply rooted clash over the very conception of development and what path native Fijians should take when involved in development projects which utilized their basic resources of land and labour. The state and the Fiji Pine Scheme (later Commission) saw the Fiji Pine Scheme as a commercially oriented enterprise with the profit level as the ultimate measure of success. This was in contradiction to the native Fijian conception of the scheme, which emphasized a communal orientation with benefits seen largely in terms of welfare, rather than purely monetary terms.⁴⁰

The demands of the western Fijian pine landowners became politicized during the election campaigns in 1977 when the Alliance Party highlighted the weaknesses of Sandblom, the head of the United Corporation, whom the Nabou

³⁹ Ibid., 1985: 423-424.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1985: 426.

landowners favoured. The Alliance government claimed that Sandblom was involved in dubious business deals in the United States of America. The conflict which culminated resulted in political dissent when a number of Nadroga/Navosa chiefs broke away from the Alliance Party and approached Gavidi traditionally, through his father, a high chief of Cuvu, to stand in the 1977 election as an independent candidate.⁴¹ Meanwhile, this move exacerbated Fijian political dissension from the Fijian Association given that it occurred concurrently with Butadroka's incitement of Fijian nationalism in eastern Viti Levu. Gavidi won both elections in the Fijian Communal Constituency of Nadroga/Navosa as shown in the following table.

Table 21: 1977 General Election: Nadroga/Navosa Fijian Communal Constituency

Constituency	Candidate/Political Party	April 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes	September 1977 General Election Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes
Nadroga/Navosa Fijian Communal	Ratu Osea Gavidi (Independent)	3,709 (52%)	3,799 (51%)
	Peniame D.Naqasima (AP)	2,886 (40%)	3,707 (49%)
	Apakuki Sasaroko	572 (8%)	
Total votes counted		7,167	7,506

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*. April 1977: 364 and November 1977: 868)

The Alliance Government's continued refusal to listen to the grievances of the Nabou pine landowners finally led to the formation of the Western United Front in 1981. The formation of the party was once again a culmination of western Fijian grievance against the power of the eastern and northeastern Fijian chiefly elites in the Alliance Party. The Western United Front had even attracted prominent western Fijian chiefs who were members of the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party. Gavidi explains:

⁴¹ Interview with Ratu Osea Gavidi, 19 May, 2004. Suva, Fiji.

Certain western chiefs including the Tui Nadi and Tui Nawaka who were very prominent members of the Alliance party in the west, decided to leave the Alliance Party and they asked me to form a political party from western Fiji. That was how the Western United Front was formed in the village of Nawaka in 1981. Thirty three western Fijian chiefs signed their support which included those who belonged to the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party. In the same meeting they elected me as President of the Western United Front.⁴²

The major goals of the Western United Front included the protection and encouragement of western Fijian unity, safeguarding landowners rights as well as the rights to develop their resources according to their aspirations. The party was to seek avenues of improving the lives of western Fijians through the Ministry of Fijian Affairs. An improvement of educational facilities in western Fiji to enable opportunities in commercial and industrial enterprises was also an objective of WUF. Additionally, WUF would fight for a freedom of association and religious expression for western Fijians.⁴³ The stated objectives of WUF highlighted that western Fijian demands, which were easily dismissed by eastern Fijian elites in the colonial period, became clearly articulated through party politics in the post-colonial period. This was a real cause for alarm in the Fijian Association camp of the Alliance Party.

Resistance to the formation of WUF continued after its formation on 17 July, 1981. The Alliance Government continued to discredit the reputation of the newly formed Western United Front and its leader Gavidi. It was able to deflect landowners' demands on a character assassination of Sandblom as well as Gavidi through his association with him. The Alliance Party's main argument against the rejection of the Nabou landowners' proposal was their suspicion of Sandblom's business deals.⁴⁴ However, for the western Fijian landowners and their chiefs, this was yet another ploy to sabotage the rights to their resources and interests as western Fijians.⁴⁵ While Sandblom may have been a fraud, what the Alliance Party ignored was the landowners' desire to be part owners of any investment on their land. The conflict rekindled the feeling of marginalisation which western Fijians have always held against the eastern

⁴² Interview with Ratu Osea Gavidi, 19 May, 2004. Suva, Fiji.

⁴³ See Lal, B. V. 1992: 246.

⁴⁴ See "Uncomfortable Coalition Companions" in *The Alliance Newsletter*, No.8. April 1982. Alliance Headquarters, Suva, Fiji: 57.

⁴⁵ See also Lal, B.V. 1992: 246.

Fijian hegemony. Concurrent with this conflict was Tui Nadi's opposition to government's allocation of \$FD435,868 for reconstruction work on Bau Island prior to Queen Elizabeth II's visit to Fiji in 1982. This led to his resignation from the Alliance Party since he believed that such money could have been put to better use in western Fiji in terms of upgrading the education system, water supply, roads and attending to other developmental needs.⁴⁶ There was reaction from the eastern and northeastern Fijian dominated Council of Chiefs with Tui Nadi's departure. Ratu Napolioni, a high chief in western Viti Levu, was referred to as a "silly-sub-chief" by a member of the chiefly council.⁴⁷ Such labeling reflected the usual derogatory attitude with which most eastern and northeastern chiefs view western Fijians and it only served to exacerbate volatile situations.

The demand by the Nabou pine landowners was a re-echo and a refinement of the demands of Apolosi Nawai and his followers in the early 20th century and again members of the Fijian Chamber of Commerce in the mid-20th century. While Nawai's "Viti Kabani" and the Fiji Chamber of Commerce's commercial ventures were suppressed by the colonial administration through the Matanitu iTaukei, those of the pine landowners were confronted by the Alliance government's policy on the development of native resources. All these demands articulated the desire for inclusion in economic development.

The pine landowners' dilemma highlights the contradictory role of Fijian institutions such as the Native Land Trust Board, as a trustee for native resources. A question which arose amongst landowners at this time was whether government or the NLTB had any specific policy to include landowners in the development of native resources. Both Burns and Spate had earlier alluded to the need for the inclusion of indigenous Fijians in economic activities.⁴⁸ The lack of serious long-term considerations to involve and guide

⁴⁶ See also Lal, B.V. 1992: 244-245.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1992: 246.

⁴⁸ See O.H.K. Spate. Council Paper No. 13 of 1959. *The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects*. Government Press, Suva, Fiji: 77-102 and *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Natural Resources and Population Trends of the Colony of Fiji 1959*. Council Paper No.1 of 1960, Legislative Council of Fiji. Government of Fiji: 125-128.

resource owners in the development of their resources has already produced dissension and can lead to politically futile situations.

The contradictions highlighted a number of pertinent issues within Fijian society. On one hand was the "disproportional distribution formula" of land rental money. What was once considered as a necessity to enable vanua unity through chiefly monetary rewards became a source of conflict. A number of chiefly titles, especially those which involve hefty land lease remuneration were contested. In 1994, the title for the Tui Nadi was contested by two rival candidates backed by two rival groups in the Vanua of Navatulevu in Nadi.⁴⁹ A similar incident of chiefly title contest occurred in an island in the Yasawa Group, which ended in physical violence.⁵⁰ Recently, the title of the Tui Cakau, highest title in the Matanitu of Tovata, was also under contest. While contest to chiefly titles is not new amongst Fijian chiefdoms, its new form has been fueled by things such as "monetary rewards". The unequal distribution formula of land lease money contributes directly to contests to chiefly titles in a number of vanua. Such colonial policies need reviewing in light of newly emerging socio-political conflicts within Fijian society.

Another fundamental issue which emerges from ongoing contradictions within the Native Land Trust Board is its dual role as a trustee for Fijian resources and as a facilitator for the development of such resources. Conflict arises when the objectives of the NLTB are incongruent with the expectations of the resource owners. In such cases the focus and orientation of modern development becomes unrealistic to resource owners. Over time they question the NLTB policies on resource development in terms of the minimal or at worst non-inclusion of resource owners in various government projects such as that undertaken by the Fiji Pine Commission. Long term questions which arise include: Does modern development imply the alienation of traditional resource owners? What are government alternatives to enable their long term survival?

⁴⁹ See *Fiji Times*, November 23, 1994. "Tui Nadi Installed Amid Row". Fiji Times Ltd., Suva, Fiji.

⁵⁰ See *Fiji Times*, November 28, 1995. "Relatives Beat up Yasawa Islanders". Fiji Times Ltd., Suva, Fiji. See also *Fiji Times*, January 31, 1996. "Disputes in Ba Feature Prominently in 1995". Fiji Times Ltd., Suva, Fiji.

In 1974, during the period of confrontation between the pine landowners in western Viti Levu and the Fiji Government, the NLTB formed its developmental arm, known as the Native Lands Development Corporation (NLDC). From the NLTB perspective, this was aimed at teaching Fijians business principles as well as to make profit out of native land which was under NLTB control. However, this venture was not meaningful to native landowners as they were not directly involved in it. The manager of the NLDC at that time, Bauan chief, Ratu Tu'uakitau Cokanauto, openly declared that more than 90% of Fijian land development at that time was sold to non-Fijians.⁵¹ Such statements added to the frustrations of western landowners who felt that they were denied the chance to contribute to the development of their land in a meaningful way. This is in terms of being involved in projects such as the development of the pine industry. Later, mismanagement in the NLDC led to its bankruptcy.

The formation of the Western United Front elevated political dissent through Fijian party politics to a new height when issues regarding resource development became more focused. The major goals of the Western United Front revolved around issues of development in education, and the opening up of opportunities in commercial and industrial enterprises. There was also a call to promote, protect and defend the rights of western land owners and the utilization of their resources according to their aspirations. At this time it was also felt that electing parliamentary representatives from western Fiji was needed to promote western Fijian interests. Also included in the goals of the party was the need to introduce changes in the Ministry of Fijian Affairs and Rural Development.⁵² Western Fijians have always felt marginalized by the eastern Fijian-dominated Ministry of Fijian Affairs. Although the ideas and thinking which contributed to the formation of WUF originated in western Viti Levu, the thrust of their argument regarding Fijian underdevelopment was a national problem.

⁵¹ See Vanua. March, 1979. Native Land Trust Board/Native Land Development Corporation pamphlet. Native Land Trust Board, Suva, Fiji.

⁵² See Lal, 1992: 246.

Gavidi believed that to make an impact on development needs in Fiji, it was important to control government. Based on this premise, he proposed during the formation of WUF in Nawaka that an approach be made to the National Federation Party for a chance to coalesce. This eventuated prior to the general election in 1982.⁵³

The Western United Front/National Federation Party Coalition

The coalition between WUF and NFP occurred prior to the 1982 general election. The Western United Front was the second western-based political party to coalesce with the Indo-Fijian dominated National Federation Party. This was the first serious attempt at a multiethnic coalition prior to the formation of the Fiji Labour Party.⁵⁴ Within the NFP camp, Apisai Tora, amongst others, left to join the Alliance. The Tui Nadi, Ratu Napolioni Dawai, on the other hand, left the Alliance to join the Western United Front.

Apart from Jai Ram Reddy's desire to extend invitation to other ethnic groups, members of the Western United Front also felt it desirable to extend their political platform beyond the western Fijian region rhetoric. This would have broadened and strengthened their political position in view of mounting opposition from the Alliance Party. The coalition between National Federation Party and the Western United Front was perhaps better organised than earlier attempts to coalesce as seen in the case of the National Democratic Party and Federation Party in 1968. Additionally, the current coalition had a clearer mandate. Lal describes the NFP/WUF coalition as a "partnership of equals". Issues which were raised by the NFP/WUF coalition included the need for political equality; the need to balance regional development; and an attempt at fairly distributing national income.⁵⁵ Such issues broadly unite the political platform of the coalition partners.

Issues raised by the NFP-WUF coalition were a threat to the survival of the Alliance Party. The bitter lesson learnt in April 1977 was still raw. Obviously

⁵³ Interview with Ratu Osea Gavidi, 19 May, 2004. Suva, Fiji.

⁵⁴ See also Lal, 1992: 245.

⁵⁵ See Lal, B. V. 1992: 247.

tactics for political survival were utilized by the Alliance Party to "prevent yet another slippage of Fijian communal support". The Alliance Party was implicated in the misuse of Australian Aid money for political propaganda through the preparation of a report on what the party should do for political survival. These included strategies such as buying off opponents like Butadroka, capitalizing on the weaknesses of the National Federation Party and promoting chiefly candidates who commanded the traditional mandate of the people. The plot was uncovered by the Australian Four Corners Programme prior to the general election of 1982 and tapes on the programme were distributed widely in Fiji by the opposition NFP. This caused an angry reaction in the Alliance Party camp, especially from its chiefly figures like Mara. The whole saga was conveniently interpreted by Fijian Alliance members as an attack on the Fijian race as a whole.⁵⁶ The situation exposes how ethnicity was often evoked to conceal class interests and the survival of a multiethnic political elite. To protect the interests of a few, their corrupt practices are politicized to imply an attack on a whole ethnic group. It also exposes how traditional elites attempt to protect their modern personal misdoings under the cover of a commitment to traditional obligations and also an appeal to unity through the politics of fear.

Such strategies camouflage internal conflicts and contradictions within Fijian society. They weaken attempts at internal opposition and the need to address crucial issues within Fijian society. Western Fijian political grievances have always been easily dismissed as an "Indian Front" in this context. From the perspective of the eastern and northeastern dominated political parties such as the Alliance, the western Fijian coalition with Indo-Fijian dominated parties justified their claim as the protector of indigenous Fijians interests

The Alliance Party and the 1982 General Election

With the return of the Alliance Party to power after the September 1977 general election, the only formidable political opponent that the party had to confront was the NFP/WUF coalition. Fijian opponents in other alternative parties such as the FNP had been weakened considerably. In the build-up to the 1982 election, the Alliance discredited the NFP argument that its structure, which

⁵⁶ See Lal, 1992: 247-248.

consisted of three different ethnic compartments, exacerbated racial discord. The Alliance Party counter-argued that the:

Argument is about as sensible as saying that the Bands of the Royal Fiji Military Forces or the Royal Fiji Police cannot produce harmonious sounds because they are made up of groups of instruments of quite different kinds. The truth is that the rich variety of life in Fiji comes about because of differences in race and culture and customs and language. Each group has its own special contribution to make to overall harmony.⁵⁷

During the general election of 1982 the Alliance Party won twenty-eight seats while the NFP/WUF coalition won twenty-four seats.⁵⁸ The Fijian Association candidates of the AP won all Fijian communal seats, amongst whom was Apisai Tora, the veteran western Fijian politician turned Alliance, defeating his rival, Tui Nadi, Ratu Napolioni Dawai, Alliance turned WUF. The table below shows the names of candidates who won in the Fijian communal and national seats.

Table 22: 1982 General Election: Fijian Communal and National Constituencies

Constituencies	Candidates	Number of Votes Polled by winning candidates/ Percentage of Votes Polled	Total votes counted/Percentage of voters who polled
Bua/Macuata Fijian Communal	Militoni Leweniqila (AP)	10,446 (97%)	10,777 (90.7%)
Cakaudrove Fijian Communal	Jone B. Naisara (AP)	11,067 (99%)	11,210 (89%)
Lau/Rotuma Fijian Communal	Jonati Mavoa (AP)	6,121 (97%)	6,330 (87.3%)
Tailevu Fijian Communal	William Toganivalu (AP)	8,813 (86%)	10,211 (90.48%)
Naitasiri Fijian Communal	Livai Nasilivata (AP)	8,773 (80%)	11,002 (87.68%)
Rewa/Serua/Namosi Fijian Communal	Tomasi Vakatora (AP)	7,492 (67%)	11,164 (86.13%)
Kadavu/Tamavua/Suva	Akariva Nabati (AP)	11,397 (91%)	12,480 (82.73%)

⁵⁷ "National Harmony Through Communal Representation", in *The Alliance Newsletter* No. 9. May 1982. The Alliance headquarters, 41 Gladstone Road, Suva, Fiji: 63.

⁵⁸ See *Fiji Royal Gazette*, August 4, 1982. Vol 109 (40). Government of Fiji: 569-598.

Suburban Communal			
Lomaiviti Muanikau Fijian Communal	Mosese Qionibaravi (AP)	8,750 ((6%)	9,150 (84.41%)
Ra/Samabula/Suva Fijian Communal	Kolinio Qiqiwaqa (AP)	7,973 (86%)	9,259 (86.8%)
Nadroga/Navosa Fijian Communal	Dr. Apenisa Kuruisaqila (AP)	4,926 (50.4%)	9,772 (90.57%)
Ba/Nadi Fijian Communal	Apisai V. Tora (AP)	7,348 (73%)	10,022 (86.12%)
Vuda/Yasawa Fijian Communal	Ratu Josaia N. Tavaiaqia (AP)	8,447 (84%)	10,039 (85.18%)
Fijian	National	Constituencies	
Vanua Levu North and West Fijian National	Ratu Soso Katonivere (NFP)	16,901 (56%)	30,252 (86.7%)
Lau/Cakaudrove/Rotuma Fijian National	Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara (AP)	17,484 (93%)	18,781 (84.9%)
South Central Fijian National	Solomone Momoivalu (AP)	13,328	19,565 (84.97%)
Suva Fijian National	David Toganivalu (AP)	13,400	26,175 (82.45%)
South Eastern Fijian National	Semesa K. Sikivou (AP)	14,322	28,866 (84.75%)
East/Central Fijian National	Ratu Penaia Ganilau (AP)	16,235	23,488 (88.23%)
North Eastern Fijian National	Filimoni Nalatu (AP)	10,778 (48%)	22,567 (88.13%)
North Central Fijian National	Temo Sukanaivalu (NFP)	15,352 (61%)	24,981 (87.86%)
North Western Fijian National	Koresi Matatolu (NFP)	15,011 (53%)	26,138 (86.55%)
South Western Fijian National	Isikeli Nadalo (WUF)	18,549 (68%)	27,318 (88.56%)

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*, Vol.109 (40) Aug., 4, 1982: 569-602) ⁵⁹

In the 1982 general election, Dr. Apenisa Kuruisaqila narrowly won the Nadroga/Navosa Fijian Communal seat against the leader of the Western United Front, Ratu Osea Gavidi. This electoral defeat temporarily shelved yet another period of western Fijian political dissent. The formation of WUF did not

⁵⁹ *Fiji Royal Gazette*, Vol. 109 (4). 4 August, 1982. Government Printer, Suva, Fiji: 569-602.

only highlight the continued expression of western Fijian dissent but also the clarity and strength of issues protested over the years.

The next and more devastating wave of political demand was to emerge with the formation of the Fiji Labour Party under the leadership of Dr. Timoci Bavadra, yet another western Fijian. The Alliance test for its Fijian mandate was its ability to control the Fijian communal seats in parliament. This control was to be challenged with the formation of the Fiji Labour Party in 1985.

Dr. Timoci Bavadra's Fiji Labour Party (FLP): The Sun Rises in the West

Nawai once predicted that: "E na dua na gauna, e na cadra mai na yasayasa vaka-Ra na matanisiga"; "that one day the sun shall rise in the west". The election of Dr. Timoci Uluivuda Bavadra as Fiji's second Prime Minister in April of 1987, made this prediction come true for western Fijians.

The Fiji Labour Party (FLP) was formed on July 6, 1985 and its first elected President was Dr Timoci Bavadra of Viseisei village, Vuda in the province of Ba.⁶⁰ Bavadra was a trade unionist and was President of the Fiji Public Service Association for eight years prior to his election as President of the Fiji Labour Party. He not only became the fourth indigenous Fijian from western Viti Levu to lead a political party but also of great significance was that the party which he led was the largest multi-ethnic political party apart from Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's Alliance Party.⁶¹ The Fiji Labour Party presented the most formidable political opposition towards the eastern and northeastern Fijian hegemony since the beginning of party politics in 1960. As such, Bavadra directly situated his newly formed Fiji Labour Party in the warpath of the Alliance Party. As a party which was formed through the democratic socialist ideology, this implied confronting both the Alliance party business class interests as well as the ethnic eastern and northeastern Fijian elite hegemony.

⁶⁰ See Bain, A. and Baba, T.1990. *Bavadra: Prime Minister, Statesman, Man of the People: Selection of Speeches and Writings 1985 – 1989*. Sunrise Press, Nadi. Fiji: xiv. The village of Viseisei or "the Splitting point" is believed to be the first landing point of the ancestors of indigenous Fijians in their west to east migration across the Pacific. "Vuda", the name of Bavadra's district, means "the source or the origin". Bavadra's electoral victory has traditional significance in Fijian history.

⁶¹ The other western Fijians who had been leaders of political parties were Apisai Tora (Western Fijian Democratic Party), Isikeli Nadalo (Fijian National Party) and Ratu Osea Gavidi (Western United Front).

On the global political platform, the Fiji Labour Party's affiliation to the democratic socialist ideology and its formation within the period of the Cold War implied positioning itself against powerful global free market interests to which the Alliance government was closely aligned. The government's global link is best explained by the *Weekend Australian* when it describes the Alliance government as:

Basically a conservative government...closely allied to the United States and Australia, in particular, and solidly pro-Western and anti-Communist. It welcomes American warships without asking questions, and has close defence links with Australia. It is seen as a pillar of Western interests in the South Pacific, and a powerful impediment against Soviet encroachments.⁶²

Indeed, the Fiji Labour Party was involved in a war which had to be fought on many fronts, both internal, involving class and ethnic interests, and external against international interests. On the local scene the party's stated policy, such as the intended nationalization of public transport like the bus industry and the intended nationalization of the tourist industry, and nationalization of the Australian-owned Emperor Gold Mine in Vatukoula, were a direct threat both to external and internal business interests. Since 1969, a year prior to independence, R.D. Patel, a member of the National Federation Party, during a Legislative Council debate, introduced a similar bill for the nationalization of the same Australian-owned Emperor Gold Mine in Vatukoula. However, fifteen out of the twenty-three members who were present, including all Fijian members, all of whom were Alliance Party members, opposed the bill.⁶³ The opposition of the Fijian members, although ironical since most of the exploited workers in Vatukoula were indigenous Fijians, is no surprise given the historical role of chiefs in pacifying indigenous Fijian labour in the gold mine. Bain explains that:

⁶² *The Weekend Australian*, 28-9 March 1987, as quoted in Durutalo, A. 2000. "Elections and the Dilemma of Indigenous Fijian Political Unity", in Lal, B. V. (Ed). *Fiji Before the Storm: Elections and the Politics of Development*. Asia Pacific Press, The Australian national University: 77.

⁶³ See *Fiji Legislative Council Debates*, Session of 30th January, 1969. Government Press, Suva, Fiji: 222-223.

A feature of the early history of gold mining was the extent to which the traditional social system (and in particular the chiefs who presided over it) were successfully integrated into the process of labour mobilization...the perceived benefits – both personal and communal – of supplying batches of men under contract, led to an extraordinary degree of collusion by chiefs in the mine labour market. It established the traditional ruling class as a crucial intermediary between the mining companies and their Fijian workers.⁶⁴

Bavadra argued that Fiji's economic problems encountered in the early and mid-1980s were a reflection of the Alliance party's myopic developmental views in general. Increasingly, colonial legacies dictated the path of development which further implied that the "fresh initiatives" extended businesses only for the elites. Policies therefore must serve to reflect the potential that people and their resources can contribute.

In his Presidential address at the launching of the Fiji Labour Party, Bavadra stated:

I would not call for the nationalization of all our industries, but there are areas where public ownership may well be warranted in the national interest. One of these areas is the bus industry...Another industry is the gold mine at Vatukoula. The existence of an almost sovereign entity in our nation is an embarrassment to us all. It is imperative that the abuses at the mine be eliminated...In addition to nationalization, we should also pursue greater use of joint-venture arrangements. One area where there is considerable scope for this is Tourism...The token gestures to local participation are simply not adequate⁶⁵

The call for the nationalization of the gold mining industry could not have come at a better time, as this was a period of industrial unrest at Vatukoula. In a considerable way, the workers' awareness of industrial relations in Fiji and its national and international links were broadened after the formation of the Fiji Labour Party. The simultaneous imposition of the recommended wage freeze exacerbated problems for the Alliance government.

The Fiji Labour Party stated policies indeed became a threat to the Alliance Party when the policies transcended the local and its global link. In terms of

⁶⁴ Bain, A.E. 1994. *Labour and Gold in Fiji*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 64-65.

⁶⁵ Bain, A. and Baba, T. 1990: 4-5.

creating an awareness amongst workers across the ethnic divide, they also challenged the well-guarded ethnic divide, which was a cornerstone of ethnic politics in Fiji. Fiji's conventional political spectrum became contested ground with the formation of the Fiji Labour Party. Additionally, the call for the restructure of indigenous institutions such as the NLTB highlighted the fact that much of Fijian problems were related to their own institutions.⁶⁶ Bavadra re-echoed the earlier calls of the western Fijian pine landowners to the unequal distribution of land rental money as well as the long-term dual role of the NLTB within Fijian society. Such challenges were a real threat to the ruling establishment when this time around, they emanated from a well founded political organization which exposed and clearly articulated the reality behind ethnic politics in Fiji. For the eastern and northeastern Fijian political elite in the Fijian Association, Bavadra represented a multidimensional threat, to both their claim to traditional paramountcy and the class interests which they promoted.

Bavadra followed two of his predecessors from the west, Tora and Nadalo, in his entry into politics through the trade union as Tora and Nadalo did in their early days. He easily embraced the notion of multi-racialism in party politics. Having grown up in a region of plantation labour, where Indo-Fijians predominated and also through his leadership of the Fiji Public Servants Association, Bavadra acquired a broader political vision regarding labour issues in Fiji. Furthermore, he also followed in the footsteps of western Fijians such as Tora, Nadalo and his contemporary Gavidia, in voicing his concerns about the marginalized status of his people and region. This explains his broad and all-encompassing multi-racial political vision. Indeed it can be argued that Bavadra was a politician who was ahead of his time.

The formation of the FLP in 1985 was influenced by a combination of both international and internal factors. Global economic restructuring occurred in the early 1980s. Between 1984 and 1985 an International Monetary Fund (IMF) country mission visited Fiji and recommended deregulation policies. This included making the labour market globally competitive. It was considered that wages in Fiji were 15% higher in comparison with wages in Third World countries such as Bangladesh, the Philippines and Indonesia. The size of

⁶⁶ Bain, A. and Baba, T., 1990: 3-5.

government was also considered too big, so to reduce government size, a number of strategies were recommended. This included a freeze on the expansion of government civil service positions, the imposition of a wage freeze and the corporatization and privatization of government-owned businesses. Added to these recommendations were the removal of price control and subsidies.⁶⁷

In 1984 the Alliance Government began implementing some of the recommendations of the IMF country mission. It started with the implementation of a wage freeze. This involved controlling the budget through a scrutiny of wage levels and increases. The overall aim of the wage freeze, as anticipated by the Alliance Government, was to improve Fiji's economy; a direct adherence to the IMF country mission recommendations. This action by the government directly led to the collapse of the Tripartite Forum; a body which negotiated on wages and other labour-related matters. The forum was comprised of government, employers and employees representatives from the Fiji Trade Union Congress (FTUC).⁶⁸

It was the collapse of the Tripartite Forum which motivated the FTUC to initiate political action. A number of meetings and workshops were organized and attended by the Trade Union representatives, workers as well as some academics from the University of the South Pacific. Other liberal-thinking people also joined the meetings and workshops which were focused on the future of the workers and the Trade Union movement in Fiji in light of the proposed economic restructuring. It was then decided that a political party based on the Trade Union movement be formed to challenge the Alliance party policies; more so those which were introduced through global economic re-structuring.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ See also Durutalo, A. 1996. "Social Consequences of Economic Policy" in 1995 Ray Parkinson memorial Lectures: *Economic Prospects for the Pacific in the 21st Century*, in Grynberg, R. (ed). School of Social and Economic Development, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji: 134-136.

⁶⁸ Interview with Professor Tupeni Baba, February 8, 2002. Suva, Fiji. He was co-founder and a former vice president of the Fiji Labour Party. Baba was the Minister for Education in Dr Bavadra's FLP and NFP Coalition Government in 1987 and Minister for Foreign Affairs in Chaudhry's Fiji Labour Party People's Coalition Government in 1999. Two indigenous Fijian academics who were founder members as well as contesting elections in the Fiji Labour Party in 1987 were Professor Tupeni Baba and Simone Durutalo.

⁶⁹ Interview with Professor Tupeni Baba, February 8, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

In his Presidential Address during the launching of the Fiji Labour Party, Bavadra argued that:

The unilateral imposition of the wage freeze late last year indicated clearly that the government was no longer willing to discuss matters with the representatives of the workers. As responsible trade unionists, we felt compelled to react strongly to government policies that threatened the well being of our members and, indeed, of all Fiji citizens. The Fiji Labour Party intends to provide a real alternative to the political groups that currently dominate the affairs of our country. At the heart of this is a commitment to democratic socialism...we are determined to ensure that development policies serve the interests of the people..It must be a party for all our people, no matter where they live, what their race, or how they earn a living.⁷⁰

The FLP's appeal to a wide cross-section of Fiji's voting communities, especially the appeal to workers throughout Fiji, its promise to indigenous Fijians regarding a re-look at the Native Land Trust Board land development policy, and the attempt to nationalize major industries such as the Emperor Gold Mine in Vatukoula, posed a direct threat to the existing government.

The Fiji Labour Party challenged the foundation of ethnic politics in Fiji. It exposed class-based politics which was camouflaged by ethnicity and challenged the foundation of orthodox Fijian politics which was controlled by the eastern and northeastern Fijian hegemony. In terms of Fijian politics, Bavadra's FLP's intended policies were not only a threat to the free market ideology which the Alliance government subscribed but also deconstructed the real meaning of of Fijian paramountcy: that Fijian paramountcy had only been enjoyed by a select group. However, Bavadra and other western Fijians in the FLP were regarded by members of the Fijian Association branch of the Alliance Party as yet another group of western dissidents who must not go unchallenged. The FLP was once again labeled as another "Indian Front".

Ethnicity, as already explained, has been the major criterion in party politics since the 1960s. The Alliance Party although professed to be multiracial, was structured according to colonial ethnic compartmentalization of race through its different ethnic arms, giving the party a "grand coalition of different races"

⁷⁰ Dr. Timoci Bavadra. July 6, 1985. "A Vision is Born: Presidential Address on the Occasion of the Launching of the Fiji Labour Party, Suva", in *Bavadra: Prime Minister, Statesman, Man of the People (Selection of Speeches and Writings 1985 – 1989)*, in Bain, A. and Baba, T. (ed). Sunrise Press, Nadi, Fiji: 1- 2.

appearance. Butadroka's party attempted to oppose the Fijian Association elites on the paramountcy of Fijian interest. This was a tough challenge for any commoner Fijian. Gavidi's party although refined western Fijian demand was confined to a region. The Fiji Labour was a manifestation of all demands across the ethnic divide and took party politics in Fiji to a higher level with its articulation of the global to local link and how these affected individual subjects regardless of their social predispositions in life. Its formation re-echoed Nayacakalou's earlier argument that an enduring political party must emanate from people who are united through a consciousness of similar experiences or subjective realities such as the trade union movement. The launching of the FLP challenged the foundation of both ethnic and class politics in significant ways. The forging of class consciousness across the ethnic divide posed a threat to political interests which had been concealed by ethnicity. Within Fijian society, the orthodox argument of protecting the rights of indigenous Fijians was used as a shield to protect certain political positions. The use of these arguments intensified as the April 1987 general election became imminent.

The Fiji Labour Party/National Federation Party Coalition

The decision to form a coalition between the Fiji Labour Party and the National Federation Party occurred prior to the April 1987 general election. It was considered the most pragmatic political decision at the time. For the newly formed and popular Fiji Labour Party, perhaps forming a coalition was not really a practical long-term solution. Given the nature of Fiji's politics, the FLP/NFP Coalition played right into the hands of their political opponents in terms of being labelled as "yet another Indian front". This was to be the first hurdle to overcome.

Some members of the FLP at the time argued against a coalition not because they did not like their coalition partner, the NFP, but because of their genuine belief that the only way forward for Fiji was to counter ethnic politics and to establish a truly multiracial political party. This was to be formed by the people themselves; members of Fiji's multiracial communities, not through party coalitions but through the formation of a single party to incorporate a broad political vision which included all communities. The party was to be formed by those who genuinely believed in the participation of all ethnic groups in Fiji's

modern political system. Some founders of the FLP believed that there could be no “short-cut” to secure long-term power control, more so in a society where ethnic politics predominate and was used to perpetuate the rule of one elite group over others.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the Coalition plan was a success with the election victory of the Fiji Labour Party and National Federation Party coalition in the April 1987 general election. Overall the Coalition won twenty-eight out of the fifty-two parliamentary seats as shown in the table below.

Table 23: April 1987 General Election: Winning FLP/NFP Candidates

Constituencies	Candidates	Number of Winning Votes/Percentage of winning votes	Total number of votes counted/Percentage of voters who polled
Labasa/Bua Indian Communal	Nooor R. Dean	8,754 (83%)	10,594 (75.54%)
Savusavu/Macuata East Indian Communal	Krishna Datt	8,640 (82%)	10,479 (72.67%)
Suva Rural Indian Communal	Dr. Satendra Nandan	7,453 (87%)	8,534 (60.31%)
Suva City Indian Communal	Harilal Patel	8,247 (89%)	9,315 (61.7%)
Nasinu Vunidawa Indian Communal	James S. Singh	8,535 (93%)	9,214 (62.5%)
Nausori /Levuka Indian Communal	Mahendra C. Vinod	6,222 (79%)	7,852 (69.5%)
Lautoka Indian Communal	Vinubhai Patel	8,875 (86%)	12,116 (69.12%)
Nadi Indian Communal	Shakar S. Rishi	10,090 (83%)	12,116 (69.12%)
Sigatoka Indian Communal	Harish Sharma	8,929 (82%)	10,952 (77.99%)
Vanua Levu North and West Fijian National	Ratu Filimoni Ralogaivau	17,265 (56%)	30,910 (75.3%)
Vanua Levu North and West Indian	Govind Swamy	17,190 (56%)	30,830 (75.26%)

⁷¹ Personal conversation with the late Simone Durutalo, a founder member and also one of the five Vice Presidents of the Fiji Labour Party from 1985 until 1994.

National			
Suva Fijian National	Dr. Tupeni Baba	12,452 (51%)	24,558 (60.4%)
Suva Indian National	Navin C. Maharaj	12,431 (51%)	24,493 (60.46%)
South Eastern Fijian National	Joeli Kalou	13,445 (47%)	24,430 (67.5%)
South Eastern Indian National	Fida Hussein	14,138 (51.4%)	27,479 (67.5%)
North Eastern Fijian National	Ratu Jo Nacola	13,230 (58%)	27,721 (75.93%)
North Eastern Indian national	Ahmed Bhamji	12,786 (56%)	22,732 (75.93%)
North Central Fijian National	Temo Sukanaivalu	15,737 (59%)	26,525 (72.29%)
North Central Indian National	Navin Patel	15,369 (58%)	26,511 (82%)
North Western Fijian National	Dr. Timoci Bavadra	15,990 (62%)	25,872 (68.27%)
North Western Indian National	Devendra Singh	15,596 (60%)	25,779 (68.18%)
South Western Fijian National	Mosese Volavola	15,127 (56%)	27,047 (76.23%)
South Western Indian National	Nitya Reddy	15,589 (58%)	27,002 (76.22%)
Northern General National	Edmund March	28,742 (58%)	49,245 (73.63%)
Western General National	Chris Work	34,077 (64%)	52,982 (72.37%)
Tavua/Vaileka Indian Communal	Samarasan Pillay	7,314 (79%)	9,248 (78.25%)
Ba Indian Communal	Balwant Singh Rakka	8,226 (76%)	10,797 (79.27%)
Ba/Lautoka Indian Rural Communal	Mahendra P. Chaudhary	8,858 (75%)	11,752 (72.8%)

(Source: *Fiji Royal Gazette*, Vol.114 (33), 4th May 1987: 511-563)

Out of the twenty-eight winning candidates in the Coalition, the seven indigenous Fijians won in the Fijian National Constituencies.⁷² Since the FLP/NFP Coalition Fijian candidates lost in all the Fijian Communal

⁷² Under the 1970 electoral provision, National seats were an extension of ethnic voting .

Constituencies, the shortfall was conveniently used by Fijian Nationalists and members of the Taukei Movement to prove that the Coalition was basically an Indian front. Alliance Party members such as Taniela Veitata and Apisai Tora became active in the Taukei movement's destabilizing marches prior to the April 1987 military coups. Perhaps, for Veitata and Tora, part of their frustration was due to the fact that they won their seats but their party lost the election.

By 1987, Tora had traversed the entire political spectrum from unionism, to western Fijian regionalism, and multiracialism to Alliance Party elitism. Tora's destabilization of a government led by another western Fijian could be explained by his belief that the Fiji Labour Party was not a Fijian Party and that Bavadra was used by Indo-Fijian leaders like Jai Ram Reddy. Tora argued:

It may sound awkward in the political sense on Bavadra coming from the west. Bavadra, although a Fijian, was just a figurehead. The majority were Indians.⁷³

Tora recalled that after the September 1987 coup, he was part of a meeting which was chaired by Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau at the Governor General's "Bure" (traditional Fijian house) in Lautoka. Rabuka met them with nine demands and informed them that if the two groups (former Alliance delegates and NFP/FLP Coalition delegates), met his demands, then they could form the government which was discussed at the Deuba Accord.⁷⁴ Mara, when asked by Rabuka, conceded that he supported Rabuka's nine demands. However, when Bavadra was asked, he turned to Jai Ram Reddy to discuss things first. At that point Mara expounded:

Why can't you make up your mind for yourself for a change. Now we know who you are always listening to. You don't have a mind of your own. You keep referring to those people.⁷⁵

⁷³ Interview with Apisai Tora, 5 June, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province.

⁷⁴ The Deuba Accord was a meeting held in Deuba on the 23rd and 24th September, 1987. It was a continuation of a meeting which was initially held in early September, 1987 and was initiated by the Governor General, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau. It focused on a National Council of Reconciliation. It was discussed that a Council of State be formed with equal number of members from both the Alliance and the FLP/NFP coalition. However, Rabuka was not invited to this meeting and on 25th September, 1987, he executed his second coup. See also Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese. 1997: 202-203.

⁷⁵ Interview with Apisai Tora, 5 June, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province.

Tora argued that Bavadra's initial reaction by referring to Reddy was an indication that he was an "unable" Fijian. Tora, however, left his eastern and northeastern political allies after the 1987 coup and ventured out on his own again. Perhaps, after Bavadra's overthrow in 1987, he realized that if it was hard for a western Fijian to become Prime Minister by legitimately winning an election, it was an impossible endeavour to attempt it from within a hierarchical political organization like the Alliance. The eastern and northeastern chiefly elites would have considered their own chiefly elites first and foremost. Tora was to experience this in his attempt to form the All National Congress against Mara's wishes.⁷⁶ The history of Fijian political dissent through party politics is interesting in the sense that Indo-Fijians have also played a pivotal role in the articulation of dissent. Western Fijian dissenters like Nadalo, Gavidj, Bavadra and even Tora, and high chiefs like Ratu Mosese Tuisawau, Ro Asela Logavatu, Ratu Julian Toganivalu, Ratu Soso Katonivere, Ratu Osea Gavidj and Ratu Ganville Lalabalavu found common ground with Indo-Fijians. The table below shows the names of the Alliance Fijian candidates who won their communal seats in the 1987 general election.

Table 24: April 1987 General Election: Winning Alliance Party Candidates - Fijian Communal Constituencies

Constituencies	Candidates	Number of winning votes/Percentage of winning votes	Total number of votes polled/Percentage of voters who polled
Bua/Macuata Fijian Communal	Militoni V.Leweniqila (AP)	7,634 (74%)	10,314 (75.69%)
Cakaudrove Fijian Communal	Viliame S. Gonelevu (AP)	9,994 (95%)	10,513 (71.05%)
Lau/Rotuma Fijian Communal	Filipe Bole (AP)	6,620 (98%)	6,742 (72.2%)
Tailevu Fijian Communal	William Toganivalu (AP)	8,813 (90%)	9,787 (77%)
Naitasiri Fijian Communal	Livai Nasilivata (AP)	7,379 (70%)	10,497 (71.3%)
Rewa/Serua/Namosi	Tomasi Vakatora	6,002 (55%)	10,826 (71.9%)

⁷⁶ See chapter six.

Fijian Communal	(AP)		
Kadavu/Tamavua and Suva Suburban Fijian Communal	Taniela Veitata (AP)	10,080 (86%)	11,698 (65.6%)
Lomaiviti/Muanikau Fijian Communal	Mosese Qionibaravi (AP)	8,307 (92%)	9,070 (68.7%)
Ra/Samabula and Suva Fijian Communal	Isikeli Kasami (AP)	6,333 (71%)	8,884 (67.07%)
Nadroga/Navosa Fijian Communal	Dr. Apenisa Kuruisaqila (AP)	4,829 (53%)	9,086 (79.4%)
Ba/Nadi Fijian Communal	Apisai V. Tora (AP)	7,868 (75%)	10,465 (70%)
Vuda/Yasawa Fijian Communal	Ratu Sir Josaia Tavaiaqia (AP)	8,569 (82%)	10,498 (66.35%)

(Source: Fiji Royal Gazette, Vol. 114 (33). 4 May, 1987: 511-563)

Two prominent Fijian party leaders, Ratu Osea Gavidi, won 47% of the Fijian votes his constituency and Sakeasi Butadroka who captured 45% of Fijian votes in his constituency, both narrowly lost the election. Apart from the three major political parties which fielded candidates, i.e., the Alliance Party, Fiji Labour Party and the National Federation Party, there were other political parties which fielded Fijian candidates as well. These included the Fijian Nationalist Party, the Western United Front and a number of independent candidates. Ratu Soso Katonivere, a high chief of Macuata in Vanua Levu, joined the National Federation Party from Vanua Levu.⁷⁷ While Indo-Fijians had only one or two major political parties, indigenous Fijians on the other hand had at least four major ones. This highlighted the heterogenous nature of Fijian society as well as the expression of independent political thinking which was regularly demonstrated through spontaneous party formations in the period under study.

The argument of "Indian dominance" became stronger after the Coalition victory in April 1987. It was then that the Taukei movement began their destabilization marches in the major urban centers of Suva in south eastern Fiji and Lautoka in the west. Through propaganda by the Taukei Movement, the FLP/NFP coalition

⁷⁷ See also *Fiji Royal Gazette*, Vol. 114 (21), 28 March, 1987. Government of Fiji: 250-257.

government was by now generally viewed by indigenous Fijians as an "Indian Government" which was there to deprive indigenous Fijians of their rights. Mass propaganda of the Taukei movement, warning indigenous Fijians of their precarious situation in their native land, spread swiftly. A similar strategy occurred during the May 2000 Coup as the coup makers spread rumours and propaganda in order to attract sympathy as well as to gain support from many Fijians.⁷⁸ Such situations are exacerbated by various reasons which are given in support of certain ideological positions. To justify his coups, Rabuka argued that:

The election of the Bavadra Government...had involved a leakage of Fijian votes to the coalition parties. This was... a reflection of a changing society...and a breaking down of Fijian society and values. Fijians were ignoring or defying the old values, their chiefs and their elders.⁷⁹

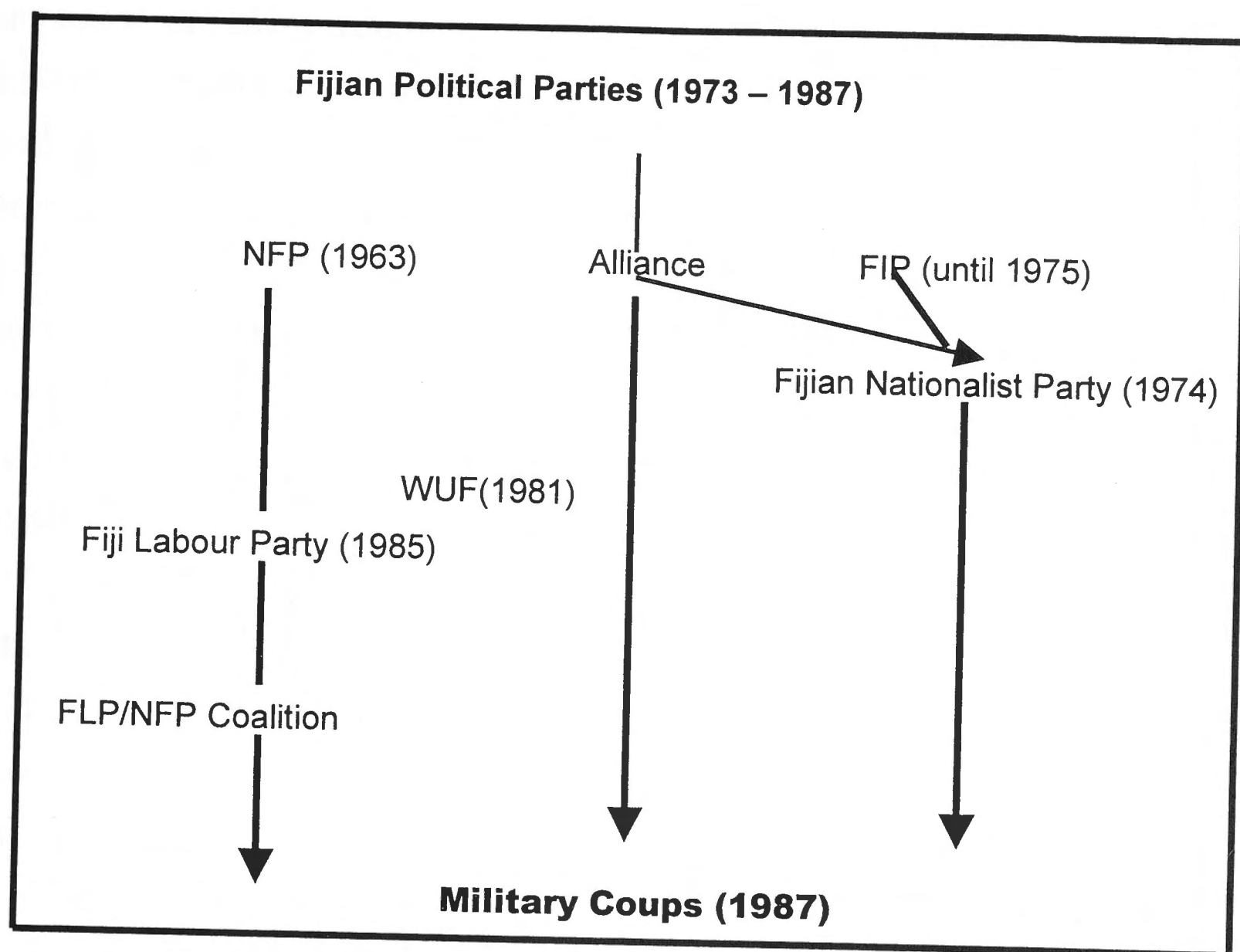
The above statement implies a number of socially constructed assumptions. First and foremost that the Alliance Party's defeat was equated with a breaking down of Fijian society and values. This further implies that the Alliance Party was epitomized as the only true representative of Fijian society. The reference to the defiance of old values, chiefs, and elders overlooked that not all chiefs and elders in Fiji subscribed to the Alliance Party. Nor did all Fijians have common chiefs and elders. When considered in the light of Fijian politics, the statement assumed that the eastern and northeastern Fijian-dominated Alliance Chiefs were overall chiefs in Fiji and additionally, it indirectly inferred the thesis of homogeneity within Fijian society, which in this context propagated the paramountcy of the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy. Rabuka himself had to change his tune of "defending the old order" when his SVT government reviewed the racially biased 1990 Constitution, a product of his own making. In my interview with Major General Rabuka he admitted that he executed the 1987 military coups on order.⁸⁰ The military coup ended phase two of Fijian party politics as shown in the diagram below.

⁷⁸ In the attempt to gain sympathy from many Fijians, the 2000 Coup instigators and supporters circulated a number of documents which would either create fear or hatred in people. One such document is titled "The Deed of Sovereignty", is in the researcher's personal collection. Another document which was also circulated during the 2000 coup and viewed by the researcher was a list of deceased Fijians who were assumed murdered for their dissenting political views.

⁷⁹ See Dean, E. and Ritova, S. 1988. *Rabuka: No Other Way*. The Marketing Team International, Suva: 33.

⁸⁰ Interview with Major General Sitiveni Rabuka, 19 May, 2004. Suva, Fiji.

Figure 14: The Second Phase of Fijian Party Politics (1973 – 1987)



Between 1973 and 1987, the formation of multiracial alliances either through Fijians joining the NFP and FLP or forming coalitions with the NFP, such as that between the NFP and WUF, contributed to the final defeat of the Alliance Party.

Alliance Party Defeat and the 1987 Military Coups: A Critical Fijian Perspective

Within Fijian society, the defeat of the Alliance Party was politicized to imply the end of Fijian dominance in their vanua and native land. It was used as a political ploy to induce fear amongst indigenous Fijians. After the coalition victory, the Taukei Movement was active in organizing marches and other destabilizing activities which were aimed at inciting indigenous fear so that the Taukei Movement could participate in overthrowing the elected government. During the destabilisation marches, slogans such as “Bavadra the boat, Reddy the Captain”⁸¹ appeared on the placards of the Taukei movement.⁸² As mentioned

⁸¹ “Reddy” refers to Jai Ram Reddy, who was the leader of the National Federation Party at the time.

⁸² My personal experience as I witnessed the destabilization marches in Suva prior to the 1987 military coups.

already, these were aimed at instigating hatred and fear amongst the indigenous population. An outcome of this "campaign of terror" was the attraction of more supporters. It also shows that the maintenance of ethnic politics in multi-ethnic societies can be most dangerous when manipulated by one group against others. This becomes more so when the dominant group controls the military or institution of repression within the state.⁸³

During the marches through Suva, the appeal to Fijian onlookers was strong. Members of the Taukei movement called out to Fijians who lined the streets as spectators to join the marches if they knew they were Fijians.⁸⁴ The destabilization marches and rumours of more unrest became an excuse for the Fiji Military Forces under Sitiveni Rabuka to execute the first military coup on May 14, 1987. In a *Fiji Times* interview in 1990, Rabuka declared that he had two basic aims for the 1987 coups. The first one was to prevent a breakdown of law and order and the second one was to "keep Fijians in control of their destiny". He added that those who were the leaders of the 1987 coups believed in maintaining Fijian traditional rights. He adds that the 1987 military coups were a measure to prevent:

The collapse of the entire Fijian power structure and the consequent destruction of the Fijian race. Our very survival as a Fijian race was at stake...the coup saved a proud people from a sad end...Fijians like the Indians in India or the Malays in Malaysia, had what could be termed as inalienable rights, including the right to decide their own fate without external interference. The Fijian problem stemmed from their being helpless to stem the flow of Indian immigrants, and so their colonial rulers – the British – who brought them were morally bound to find a solution to it. They had been denied their right of self-determination once the British had gone.⁸⁵

Within Fijian society, a number of issues emerged from this 1987 coup justification. First and foremost was the assumption that the Alliance electoral defeat implied "the collapse of the entire Fijian power structure". Indeed there are multiple realities within the realm of Fijian power structure. The continuous formation of alternative Fijian political parties since the beginning of party politics in the 1960s is a direct reflection of the multiple realities of Fijian power

⁸³ See also Clapham, C. 1985. *Third World Politics: An introduction*. The University of Wisconsin Press, U.S.A.

⁸⁴ My personal experience as an onlooker in the streets of Suva during the 1987 de-stabilization marches prior to the first military coup.

⁸⁵ Velia, M. "Don't Dismiss Role of Army – Rabuka", in *Fiji Times*, 1990.

structure. Assumptions of a "homogenous power structure" confirms the earlier argument that the formation of the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party through the Fijian Affairs Board, over time, had not only inherited its ideology and political interests but equally inherited "the myth of homogeneity" which it conveniently used to defend its paramountcy claim.⁸⁶ Another underlying assumption in such a proposition is that the Alliance Party, or its Fijian Association arm and those who supported it, were the rightful and only inheritors of the assumed "homogenous Fijian power structure." The thesis of a "homogenous power structure" concealed the different realities within Fijian society and those who propagated its existence utilized the "race or ethnic" argument to promote their own interests. In such a context the interests of the "non-Alliance" Fijians, let alone the "non-Alliance" voting public, was totally marginalized.

The 1987 military coups highlighted long-term internal Fijian contradictions. At the national level, the coups and their aftermath challenged the foundation of the modern state and its various institutions which were imposed by the British colonizers. Fijian political unity, which was a social construction of Christianity and the colonial state, became problematic with the introduction of liberal democracy and the commencement of party politics. It facilitated the re-emergence of once-independent political thinking amongst people of different *vanua*, *matanitu* or kinship groups. Such situations pose a direct threat to those who claim perpetual control of political power. Fiji's 1987 military coups can be viewed as a means for retaining power control by an elite group.

Fragmentation of an Orthodoxy

Within Fijian society, the defeat of the Alliance Party and the consequent military coups symbolized the fragmentation of an orthodoxy which was promoted by the Fijian Association. The foundation of the ideologies of *vanua*, *Lotu* and *Matanitu*, which had evolved since the early 1800s, were challenged through the politics of dissent. The defeat of the Alliance signaled the fragmentation of an orthodoxy which was promoted through the Fijian Association as well as challenging the basis of authority which emanated from

⁸⁶ See Durutalo, A. 2000, in Lal, B.V. (Ed): 73 and Routledge, D. 1985. *Matanitu: The Struggle for Power in Early Fiji*. Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, Fiji: 220.

such power. The military coups can be viewed as an attempt to salvage a fragmented order. Additionally, the defeat of the Alliance Party ushered in a new political epoch which marked the entry of educated commoner Fijians such as Rabuka, as power brokers and active participants in the quest for political control.

The coups challenged the foundation of the modern state in terms of any semblance of Fijian unity as different traditional groups viewed each other with suspicion. The only common experience which seemed to have prevailed at this time was the much touted "fear of the Indians". However, *vanua* and *matanitu* rivalry were obscured. The people of Kubuna on Viti Levu for example, viewed the domination of the people of Tovata, those from the north and eastern islands, with contempt. Mara's return to the political helm continued the longstanding suspicion of eastern Fijian ambition by those on Viti Levu. It can be likened to the political prowess of Ma'afu in the mid-nineteenth century. This suspicion was to be clearly demonstrated in the actions which took place on May 19, 2000 by George Spate and his group. Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's unceremonious dismissal did not only link the role of the past in the coups of 1987 and that of 2000 but also demonstrated the complexities of internal Fijian power competitions and rivalries. This is the powerful undercurrent which propelled Fijian party politics in the period under study.

The role of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga or Great Council of Chiefs in supporting Rabuka's military coups can be viewed from a number of perspectives. First and foremost was the belief in the maintenance of their traditional power. Although the role of the Council of Chiefs in supporting the military coups was a decisive and powerful one, it however, failed to unite indigenous Fijians. Immediately after the coups, the expression of independent political thinking and dissent manifested further on Viti Levu as will be explained in chapter six.

Chapter Summary

The second phase of Fijian party politics (1973 – 1987), has highlighted a period of intensive political dissent within Fijian society, leading to the formation of three new political parties. The period marked the final re-strengthening and ultimate demise of the Alliance Party through consistent challenges by the Fijian

Nationalist Party in 1975, the Western United Front in 1981 and the Fiji Labour Party in 1985. Party makers like Butadroka, Gavidia and Bavadra articulated issues which contributed to the defeat of the Alliance party and consequently fragmented the orthodoxy which supported it. The challenges highlighted the ways in which various manifestations of Fijian political thinking and dissent converged through party politics to oppose the dominance of the Alliance Party.

Concurrent with the brewing of Butadroka's Fijian nationalism was the making of another Fijian political party in western Viti Levu. Gavidia's Western United Front refined western Fijian demand for resource development and control. The Western United Front articulated specific and well defined objectives. The demand for the inclusion of indigenous Fijians in the development of their resources was to have a long-term effect on Fijian party politics, especially the articulation of issues regarding Fijian institutional structures, development and leadership. Earlier demands were to be exacerbated by the issues highlighted by the Fiji Labour Party. These issues transcended the ethnic divide and linked local policies with global ones.

The period also highlighted the significant role played by the National Federation Party as a coalition partner for Fijian political parties, more so those in western Viti Levu. This began in the merger with the National Democratic Party in 1968, the coalition with WUF in 1981 and the coalition with the Fiji Labour Party in 1987. Additionally, the party also served as a haven for dissident Fijian politicians as highlighted in this chapter. The use of "fear of Indians" as a means to unite indigenous Fijians became obscured after the coups of 1987, for after the elimination of the "Indian factor", Fijians still articulated independent political thinking and dissent through overt political gestures.

Introduction

The 1987 coups, as discussed in chapter five, while exemplifying the end of an era in Fijian party politics, also marked the beginning of a new one, through an attempt at re-constructing the old as a means of continuity. An outstanding characteristic of Fijian party politics after 1987 was the attempt to reconstruct the old eastern and northeastern order through state intervention. This involved a number of publicly sanctioned events prior to the promulgation of a racially biased 1990 constitution. A number of decrees were passed to limit various types of freedom, foremost amongst which was the Sunday Observance Decree which outlawed sports, recreation and even operating businesses like public transport on Sundays.¹ Influential and conservative members of the Methodist Church who were ardent coup supporters had managed to influence the interim military government that Sunday was to be respected by all Fiji citizens, irrespective of their religious affiliations. Even Christian Fijians who were Seventh Day Adventists and who worshipped on Saturdays were forced to respect the Sunday ban. Additionally, the 1990 Constitution with its new electoral system imposed communal voting and within Fijian society, thirty-two out of the thirty-seven Fijian seats were reserved for rural Fijians in the provinces.² It was generally believed that Fijians in the rural still maintained the sanctity of the old order which was represented by the eastern and northeastern chiefly elites.

Although Fijians at first overwhelmingly supported Rabuka's publicly declared reasons for his coups, by 1989 dissent surfaced as a number of Viti Levu chiefs and Fijians realized that the coups only enabled the return of Mara and other

¹ See also Lal, B.V. 1992. *Broken Waves: A History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century*. Centre for Pacific Island Studies and University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu: 294.

² See *Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Fiji*, 25th July, 1990: 49.

Tovata elites. The seemingly united Taukei stand against ethnic Indians after the FLP/NFP victory and execution of the first coup had developed a step further through the outburst of Butadroka on the day of the coup. He yelled slurs against Mara, blaming him for the compromised position of indigenous Fijian rights in the 1970 Constitution which he believed contributed to the rise of Fijian militancy and "taukeism". For Viti Levu nationalists like Butadroka, their reading of the whole Fijian marginalisation ideology had a more profound appendix to it. They fully understood that it concealed the powerful role of islander chiefs like Mara in Fijian politics. A possible deconstruction and breakdown of the ideology of Fijian paramountcy and unity could possibly lead to internal Fijian strife.

The inclusion of Butadroka in the military cabinet line-up after the May 1987 coup was a means of pacifying him from his hardline stand against islander chiefs like Mara. Lal explains:

He [Butadroka] had called Mara unseemly names soon after the May coup ("the bastard who sold Fiji," "the bloody Judas Iscariot").³

The Fijian reconstruction process between May 1987 and 1991 was challenged by intra-Fijian rivalry. The grand effort to establish the SVT was not enough to artificially induce the much-touted Fijian political unity. As will be seen in chapter seven, the SVT further fragmented, facilitating the emergence of FAP in 1993, the VLV in 1998 and finally the SDL in 2001. Each of these parties attempted to depict its own notion of the eastern and northeastern Fijian orthodoxy and used it to legitimize its existence amongst Fijian voters. This peculiar nature of Fijian party politics complicates the attempt to conceptualize Fijian political parties as purely modern institutions which are an integral part of representative government in a liberal democracy. They are in fact prisms through which traditional rivalry and dissent could be understood.

Between the coups of 1987 and 1990, all effort was concentrated on the attempt to change the rules and re-construct the political system so as to enable the return of the eastern and northeastern chiefly hegemony into power. In 1988 Ratu Mara stated in the Bose ni Turaga that Fiji's 1970 Constitution was no

³ Lal, B.V. 1992: 295.

longer sufficient and acceptable to solve Fiji's political crisis. In reply Bavadra argued that:

In 17 years of office, he [Mara] never once suggested that the Constitution, of which he was principal architect, was deficient in any way or that it did not adequately safeguard the interests of the indigenous Fijians. It is obvious to the people of Fiji that he only became dissatisfied with the Constitution after he lost the 1987 election.⁴

This chapter discusses the attempt to restore the Fijian Administration version of Fijian political order through party politics. Unity under this reconstructed order was realized only for a short while as the outcome of the coups facilitated further rivalries and dissent. The first major task undertaken to facilitate the re-strengthening of political unity through the eastern and northeastern hegemony was the formulation of a new Constitution. The 1990 Constitution, which reserved certain provisions for Fijians and Fijian elites, facilitated the formation of the "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei" (SVT) party in 1991. Additionally, the constitution re-constituted the electoral regulation in purely ethnic terms and the Fijian voting system on provincial and communal lines demonstrated a desperate attempt at social engineering.

At the end of 1991, the SVT as a reincarnated embodiment of the eastern and northeastern hegemony, was ready for yet another round of challenge in Fijian party politics. The dominance of former Alliance stalwarts in the Governor General's Council of Advisors after the May 1987 coup was conspicuous. These included Ratu Josaia Tavaiaqia, Livai Nasilivata, Jone Veisamasama, Viliame Gonelevu, Dr. Apenisa Kuruisaqila, Filipe Bole, Josua Toganivalu, and Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. Apart from Rabuka, seven out of the fifteen council of advisors were former Alliance members, five of whom were from eastern and northeastern Fiji.⁵ This reflected the attempt to restore the old eastern and northeastern order. Rabuka's role in restoring the old order, over time, revealed the conspiracy plot, which he claimed, used him to stage the coups. While at first he was adamant about his personal convictions to "save a proud race from a sad end", his later utterances unveiled the perpetrators and gave him the

⁴ Bain, A. and Baba, T. 1990. *Bavadra: Prime Minister, Statesman, Man of the People*. Sunrise Press, Nadi, Fiji: 202.

⁵ See Lal, B.V. 1992: 279.

appearance of "being used".⁶ In an interview by *The Daily Post* in 1992 Rabuka stated that:

He was asked by Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara to carry out the first military coup in 1987... On one occasion, after the coup, he paid a visit to Ratu Sir Kamisese and Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau, who was then Governor General... Ratu Sir Penaia then asked Ratu Sir Kamisese why he wanted the coup to be carried out... Ratu Sir Kamisese replied, he did not want to see what they had built destroyed.⁷

Chapter six discusses how the attempt to impose political unity within Fijian society was frustrated by the formation of political groups which challenged the basis of this imposed form of unity. On the main island Viti Levu, by 1989 moves were underway to establish an alternative Viti Levu Council of Chiefs (VLCC) together with a "Matanitu ni Yasayasa Vaka-Ra" or Western Confederacy". The Bose Levu Vakaturaga or Great Council of Chiefs, was at this time, viewed by a number of Viti Levu chiefs as dominated by Tovata chiefs. The dominance of Tovata chiefs in the BLV and Rabuka's promotion as a life member of the institution contributed to such political agitation. A break by the chiefs on Viti Levu would have weakened the foundation of the colonially-created Bose Levu Vakaturaga. Most if not all of the chiefs from the small islands who were members of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga, including Mara, derived much of their "legitimate authority" from the wealth they accumulated on Viti Levu.

Of Chiefs, Military Coups and Party Politics

Rabuka's promotion as a "life member" of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga indirectly linked the BLV with the 1987 military coups. In my interview with Rabuka he explained that the coup was not his decision, implying that he was asked to execute it as he had explained through various media.⁸ Rabuka's open declaration of the goals of his military coups and the chiefs' decision to make him a life member of the BLV, exposed the link between "Major General

⁶ In my interview with Sitiveni Rabuka, he admitted that he was used to stage the 1987 coups.

⁷ See Chambers, C. "Rabuka Reveals Secret to Nadroga: PM asked for Coup", in *The Daily Post*, March 20, 1992: 1.

⁸ Interview with Sitiveni Rabuka. Suva, Fiji. See also Lal, B.V. 1992: 274 and Field, M., Baba, T., and Baba, U.N. 2005. *Speight of Violence: Inside Fiji's 2000 Coup*. Reed Books, New Zealand:38 on others' roles in the 1987 coups.

Rabuka, the military coups and chiefly interests". The coups served as a link between the Bose Levu Vakaturaga and the coup maker. At least for a short while after the military coups, both groups felt that they needed each other: Rabuka for his heroic deeds in executing the coups on behalf of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga, and the other for making him a life member of the chiefly institution and sanctioning his role as a coup maker in the 1990 Constitution.⁹

However, such a relationship was to emerge with its own internal contradictions not long after the coups. This was due to a number of unforeseen circumstances. First and foremost was the general appearance to the majority of eastern Fijians on Viti Levu as well as those from the Yasayasa Vaka-Ra that there was an intense "Tovata line up" in the interim military government. The control of the government again by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, as well as the state by Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau, Governor General turned President after the September 1987 coup, was also considered in the same negative light. On the one hand, the Kubuna chiefs and people felt marginalized as government and the state were Tovata-controlled after 1987. On the other hand, some western Fijian chiefs and people felt that Bavadra's overthrow had more to do with his being a western Fijian than his being a member of an Indian-dominated coalition government. In my interview with Ratu Osea Gavidi, he stated that:

Our people favoured the FLP/NFP Coalition as being a grass roots party which would have taken care of their concerns from 1987 onwards. But unfortunately, when the coup happened, they felt that the takeover was designed to return the old order of the Alliance Party into power.¹⁰

The appointment of Mara and Ganilau, both from the Matanitu Tovata, as heads of government and state respectively, created suspicion and exacerbated conflicts amongst the members of different traditional polities throughout Fiji. For the majority of the Kubuna chiefs and people as well as those from western Fiji, the political line-up in terms of government and state control by Fijians from Tovata was tantamount to a conspiracy plot. A Fijian chief on Viti Levu who was interviewed in 1995 on his views about the 1987 military coups and the dominance of the Tovata chiefs in the GCC and government remarked that the

⁹ See *Constitution for the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji*, 25th July 1990.

¹⁰ Interview with Ratu Osea Gavidi, 19 May, 2004. Suva, Fiji.

situation could be likened to "the return of Ma'afu to conquer Viti Levu polities".¹¹

Another level of contradictions emerged as indigenous Fijians themselves did not all support Rabuka's military coups for various reasons. While some firmly believed in the promotion of liberal democracy in party politics, others like Fijian Nationalist leader Sakeasi Butadroka supported the ousting of the Alliance government, since he believed that the Alliance Party had not done enough to improve the economic status of indigenous Fijians. In a meeting organized by the Pacific Ecumenical Forum in Suva in 1990, Butadroka explained that he had always advocated that Fijians should control Fiji politically. He believed that the 1970 constitution did not help the indigenous Fijians.¹² Butadroka supported the Alliance electoral defeat because according to him, the 1970 Constitution perpetuated the marginalization of the indigenous people. During the 1987 general election, Butadroka requested his supporters in the Muanikau and Naitasiri Constituencies to vote for the FLP/NFP Coalition instead of the Fijian Nationalist Party since the coalition had the potential to win the 1987 general election. This contributed directly to the defeat of the Alliance Party.¹³ For Viti Levu nationalist politicians like Butadroka, Mara's return to power through his leadership of the Interim Administration was aggravating the marginalized Fijian situation. Butadroka viewed Mara's ambition as an island chief controlling political power on Viti Levu as a powerful one.

At another level of post-coup contradictions, feelings of suspicion and rivalry were not helped by Rabuka's unstable leadership style. This was quickly highlighted by his political opponents. Josevata Kamikamica, founder and

¹¹ Interview with the late Ratu Meli Verebalavu, chief of the Vanua of Namena in Tailevu province. The Matanitu of Tovata itself, where both Mara and Ganilau were members, was a creation of the Tongan noble Ma'afu. For Kubuna chiefs, Tovata emerged out of foreign political ambition.

¹² Matau, R. "Kamikamica, Adi Kuini, Baba and Buta in Debate", in *The Daily Post*, August 3, 1990: 2.

¹³ See Matau, R. "Kamikamica, Adi Kuini, Baba and Buta in Debate" in *The Daily Post*, August 3, 1990: 2.

leader of the Fijian Association Party, summarized Rabuka's leadership style by arguing that Rabuka:

Took over a role that he has not had the experience for, particularly civilian leadership, because he has been in the army most of his working life. The principles and style of leadership in a democratic environment is different from the military...It [leadership] shouldn't really be a problem if you have some idea of what you are doing.¹⁴

Tovata's over-dominance also led to other dissenting actions being taken by non-Tovata chiefs and people, especially those on Viti Levu. People met to form various councils or forums to counter what they considered as the impact of Tovata power control. These meetings highlighted ways in which Fijian political thinking and dissent were articulated by those involved. It included the move to create a Viti Levu Council of Chiefs and the attempt to form a "Matanitu for the Yasayasa Vaka-Ra" people or the western Confederacy and the Council of Commons. Again in the move to establish a Viti Levu Council of Chiefs, Viti Levu politicians like Butadroka were most active in its formation. This was aimed at marginalizing the domineering roles of Tovata chiefs like Mara in the Bose Levu Vakaturaga. Such expressions of internal political dissent weakened the attempt at Fijian political unity and the move to create a united front after the 1987 military coups.

The general downturn of Fiji's economy following the 1987 military coups added to internal Fijian contradictions and overall dissatisfaction by the people. It also contributed to a growing skepticism amongst grassroot Fijians about the real objectives of the coups. The interim administration was viewed with suspicion especially when most of its members were part of the defeated Alliance government which many Fijians in different regions felt had not done enough for the indigenous course during their reign.

A discussion paper which was prepared by the Fijian Administration after the 1987 military coups on the need to form a new Fijian political party to replace

¹⁴ *The Review*, February 1994. The Review Ltd., Suva, Fiji: 25.

the Fijian Association justified the move on the grounds that:

The economic policies of the Interim Administration although acknowledged to be great for the nation, have not really benefited the needy Fijians. The roads in the rural areas are still in deplorable conditions resulting in the withdrawal of bus services by bus operators. Jetties and island roads have not been improved since they deteriorated or were destroyed by cyclones some years ago, resulting in communication difficulties within and out of islands in the Lomaiviti and Lau groups. The failure of the Interim Government in passing legislations for the effective use of indigenous resources such as timber. The indigenous view that companies such as Fiji Forest Industries (FFI), Pacific Timber, etc., are exploiting resources in Fiji [through] overseas operators and companies.¹⁵

However, such views had already formed the basis of parties such as Gavidi's WUF and Bavadra's FLP. Their rejection, deliberate or otherwise, highlights the complexity of Fijian politics as traditional rivalries are propelled through party politics. In this context, and in the reality of modern power rivalry, real concerns championed by the wrong people or groups are rejected.

In the attempt to gloss over societal contradictions an attempt was made to unite indigenous Fijians through the creation of a new constitution. The 1990 constitution was yet again aimed at another social construction of Fijian political unity. The document at best can be regarded as the "legalization of authoritarian rule". In the long term as already experienced in further political turmoil and ongoing political dissent within Fijian society, neither the 1990 constitution nor its provisions emphasizing mandatory ethnic voting could suppress intra-societal conflicts, rivalries and dissent.

The Viti Levu Council of Chiefs (VLCC) and Yasayasa Vaka-Ra Confederacy (Western Confederacy): A Further Expression of Political Dissent

The 1987 coups and its aftermath created its own dynamics within Fijian society. On Viti Levu, the move to form a Viti Levu Council of Chiefs (VLCC) and ensuing "Yasayasa Vaka-Ra" Confederacy had already started by 1989. As

¹⁵ "Fijian Political Party Notes", A Discussion Paper for the formation of a new Fijian Political Party after the 1987 Military Coups. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

mentioned earlier in this thesis, the Matanitu in its conceptualization as a hierarchical political construct did not evolve in western Fiji. During the time of colonization attempts were made through the Matanitu iTaukei to divide western Fiji between the two eastern Viti Levu matanitu of Kubuna and Burebasaga. However, western Fijians never recognized this social construction because it did not evolve naturally from their own socio-political structures. Western Fijians therefore have continued to articulate independent political thinking which reflected the egalitarian nature of their vanua. The move to form a western confederacy after 1987 was a political one. It was aimed at expressing and asserting the independence of an indigenous group. Tora explained that the egalitarian nature of the western Fijian polities was a natural barrier for any attempt to either impose unrecognized traditional authority or artificially create an institution like the matanitu to unite people.¹⁶

Within Fijian society, political events following the coups ostracized some kinship groups and vanua, more so those from western Viti Levu where ousted Prime Minister Bavadra belonged. Kubuna and Burebasaga chiefs on Viti Levu who were not members of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga felt marginalized and out of step with the dominant eastern and northeastern Fijian political elites. Viti Levu chiefs and political leaders such as Ratu Celua Cakobau of Bau, Ratu Osea Gavidi of Nadroga, Ratu Mosese Tuisawau of Rewa, Timoci Naco of Ra, Sakeasi Butadroka of Rewa, Kolinio Qiqiwaqa of Ra, Ratu Isireli Vuibau of Tailevu, Ro Tubuanakoro Logavatu of Rewa and other chiefs from the eight provinces on Viti Levu were at the forefront of the political movement to establish a Viti Levu Council of Chiefs.¹⁷

The Chairman of the Viti Levu Council of Chiefs, Ratu Osea Gavidi, in one of the meetings of the VLCC, explained that the thinking behind the formation of the "Yasayasa Vaka-Ra" Confederacy to be the fourth Confederacy was supported by the Bose Levu Vakaturaga after the 1987 coup.¹⁸ However, this was only a political ploy to gain support for the coups from western Fijians and

¹⁶ Interview with Apisai Tora, 5 June 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province.

¹⁷ See Paper for the "Bose Levu Vakaturaga e Viti Levu" on May 21, 1993 (Conference Room, Southern Cross Hotel, Suva); July 15, 1993 (Education House, Knolly Street, Suva); September 9-11, 1993 Cuvu village, Nadroga. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

¹⁸ This was also supported by Apisai Tora in my interview with him at his village in Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province on June 5, 2002.

to conceal the fact that there were allegations which implicated groups in eastern and northeastern Fiji for Bavadra's overthrow.¹⁹ Furthermore, Gavidia argued that since the death of Bavadra was also linked to his overthrow, there should be a public enquiry demanded by the Viti Levu people about the real purpose behind Rabuka's 1987 coups and to see whether the Viti Levu people had gained anything useful from the coup.²⁰

The move to form the VLCC and hence the Western Confederacy was also aimed at strengthening the political power base of the Viti Levu chiefs in a consolidated effort to have greater control in the development of their resources. Timoci Naco, a member of the VLCC from the province of Ra, argued that one of the biggest problems in terms of the non-involvement of Fijian resource owners, especially on Viti Levu, in the development of their resources was to be found within the realm of Fijian political leadership itself. In this case, Fijians who controlled political leadership came from small islands with hardly any land. It was in their interest to keep resource owners powerless since this was the only way that resource owners could be politically marginalized in their own land.²¹

The evolution of such political thinking by 1987 demonstrated a wider understanding of the link between resource control and power control. While in pre-colonial Fiji the same was also true, political power was limited since politics was a local vanua affair and conducted in accordance with alliances maintained amongst the different vanua. Additionally, power was founded on the practice of reciprocity which ensured the redistribution of resources between chiefs and people and the continuity of this cycle. This consolidated the traditional political philosophy which emphasized the symbiotic relationship which was explained by the idiom: "a turaga ni tamata; a tamata ni turaga" meaning "a chief of the people and a people of the chief". It cemented the link between chief and people. The western Fijian traditional political philosophy of viewing chiefs as

¹⁹ See also Sharpham, J. 2000. *Rabuka of Fiji: The Authorised Biography of Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka*. Central Queensland University: 105-109.

²⁰ See Gavidia, Ratu Osea, "Matanitu Vanua ni Yasayasa VakaRa", in Paper for *Bose Levu Vakaturaga e Viti Levu* September 9-11, 1993. Cuvu, Nadroga: 4. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

²¹ See Naco, T. "Yaubula e Loma ni Qele", in *Bose Levu Vakaturaga e Viti Levu*, September 9-11, 1993: 4. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

“first amongst equals” advances the philosophy to another level, implying first and foremost that a chief is leader amongst people of equal ranks. It implies mutual respect as the foundation for the survival of a group. This kind of thinking facilitated a balance of power system which prevented personal accumulation of resources for its own sake. It also facilitated the maintenance of a traditional welfare system through reciprocity which redistributed resources and concurrently empowered all members of a social group. Modern politics with its philosophy of neo-liberal democracy, however, is individualistic. It allows leaders to acquire excessive power through personal accumulation of undistributed wealth. A major weakness which has emerged within the contemporary chiefly institution is the convenient use of the traditional system to support modern day and individualistic interests. The few chiefly leaders who controlled government between 1960 and 1999 were viewed with suspicion when their newly found wealth and power became a means of prolonging their leadership.

The formation of the VLCC had a number of objectives. The overall goal was to counter the over-dominance of Fijians from the Tovata Confederacy in the post-coup interim military government. There was a general feeling amongst the members of the VLCC that Ratu Mara's Alliance government had done little to develop Fijian-owned resources for the benefits of the owners. In western Viti Levu, political parties, such as Gavidi's Western United Front, were formed to promote the participation of indigenous Fijians in the development of their resources. Likewise, Butadroka's Fijian Nationalist Party, with its power base mostly in eastern Fiji, had also constantly propagated the same message since its formation.

The return of the two Tovata chiefs, Mara and Ganilau to join their “bati” or warrior, Rabuka, was too convenient to be a coincidence from the Viti Levu political perspective. According to the VLCC political perspective, the 1987 coups had more to them than their ethnic explanations since they camouflaged the internal aspirations of non-Viti Levu chiefs to control resources and political power on Viti Levu and in Fiji as a whole. Such internal interpretations of Fijian politics after 1987 was a major reason for the formation of the VLCC.

Foremost in the attempt to form the Viti Levu Council of Chiefs was the recognition of the western Confederacy and the need to revolve the post of Fiji's presidency to include high chiefs from western Viti Levu. As it was, western Fijian chiefs missed out on the chance because traditionally, they belonged neither to Kubuna, Burebasaga nor Tovata, the three eastern and northeastern Fijian confederacies in which the role of Fiji's Presidency was revolved.²² After the 2000 coup, the move by western Fijians to secede from eastern Fiji led to the appointment of Ratu Josefa Iloilo, a chief from the vanua of Vuda in western Viti Levu, to be President of Fiji.²³ This marked a new trend in Fijian political development where contemporary militant acts by western Fijians were appeased through power-sharing, enabling a move to a "balance of power" situation.²⁴ Earlier western Fijian dissidents like Navosavakadua and Nawai were simply exiled.

Also amongst the goals of the VLCC was the formation of a Viti Levu resource owners organization. The organization was to take control of the development of indigenous resources on Viti Levu through sustainable resource management. Such a move would have checked the power of non-Viti Levu political leaders who were regarded as usurpers in terms of allocating resources which did not belong to them.²⁵ Timoci Naco, in the same meeting, added:

E dua na vuni leqa levu tale ga, ni ra mai vakatulewa tiko o ira ka sega tu na kedra qele.²⁶

One of the major problems arises from the fact that the decision makers are usually the ones who do not own land.

²² See Gavid, Ratu Osea. "Matanitu Vanua ni Yasayasa VakaRa" in paper *Na Bose Levu Vakaturaga e Viti Levu*, September 9-11, 1993, Cuvu, Nadroga: 5. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

²³ Interview with Ratu Osea Gavid, Suva, Fiji.

²⁴ See Chambers, C. "Chiefs Warn of Secession Trouble" in *The Fiji Times*, August 1, 2000: 2. In my interview with the Tui Vitogo, Ratu Jovesa Sovasova, he acknowledged that the formation of a Western Sovereign State was high on the agenda of a meeting of western Fijian chiefs in Nadi after the 2000 coup. The western people believed that forming their own state with other ethnic groups in their region is the best way forward for them. They were tired of the squabbles of eastern Fijian chiefs. In 1987 it was Rabuka and in 2000 it was a part-Fijian, Speight.

²⁵ See Gavid, Ratu Osea, "Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Yaubula e Viti Levu (Natural Resource Owners Association of Viti Levu)" in Paper for the Bose Levu Vakaturaga e Viti Levu, September 9-11, 1991: 9. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

²⁶ Naco, T. "Yaubula e Loma ni Qele" in Paper for the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga e Viti Levu*, September 9-11, 1991, Cuvu village, Nadroga: 4. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

The above statement was aimed particularly at indigenous Fijian leaders who came from the small islands in the maritime provinces in the east. Linked to the objective of reviewing resource development was the desire to review the role of the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) as trustee for indigenous Fijian resources. Butadroka, leader of the Fijian Nationalist party and member of the VLCC, proposed that the NLTB should cease deducting its 25% share of native land rental money because it had done nothing for the benefit of indigenous resource owners. Butadroka added that all freehold and crown land should have been returned to indigenous Fijians at the time of independence and from thereon, a solution worked out for land development. He argued that since the majority of grassroot landowners did not benefit from land rental money, the NLTB should pay for all expenses. In terms of the expiry of ALTA leases, Butadroka could not understand the rationale that landowners should pay for the development done on native land since landowners were not individually consulted to lease their land in the first place.²⁷

Discussions also centered on the failure of the Alliance government and the NLTB to change the laws regarding ownership of Fijian resources since independence. This involved laws regulating the ownership of traditional fishing grounds as well as those regulating underground minerals such as gold. The payment of royalties to indigenous resource owners was also a concern of the VLCC. In this case, the payment of royalties regarding the Australian-owned Emperor Gold mine at Vatukoula was highlighted.²⁸

Concern was also raised regarding the role of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga in the formation of a political party, the SVT, which was aimed at uniting all indigenous Fijians.

²⁷ Butadroka, S., "Yaubula: Freehold and Crown Land", in Paper for the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga e Viti Levu*, September 9-11, 1991: 5. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

²⁸ Butadroka, S. "Yaubula: Freehold and Crown Land", in Paper for the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga e Viti Levu*. September 9-11, Cuvu village, Nadroga: 5-6. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

Butadroka argued:

Ni sa mai vakapolitikitaki na matabose oqo,sa na vakatatiki na nona rai kei na nona vakatau lewa. Na nona rai e na gauna oqo sa na gole vakabibi kina vanua ka gole kina na veidigidigi ka na rawa ni volitaka vakarawarawa vei ira na vulagi e so na noda inuinui dei na iTaukei me vaka na iyau bula ni noda vanua kei na so tale.²⁹

The view of the Great Council of Chiefs will be biased since the institution has been politicized. The GCC will concentrate more on elections and its direct involvement in party politics can result in the sale of indigenous resources and other things to non-Fijians.

While the move to form a Viti Levu Council of Chiefs and a western confederacy was not officially recognized by the Fijian Administration since it was regarded as a subversive act, an important development which emanated from the move was the continued articulation of independent political thinking and dissent within Fijian society. As mentioned earlier, such moves directly impacted on later decisions such as the end of parliamentary siege during the 2000 coup after western Fijians threatened to secede from eastern Fiji and form their own government with all races living in the west. The late Tui Vitogo, explained that western Fijians became frustrated with "the little squabble for power which happened in Suva every now and again".³⁰

The aftermath of the 1987 coup d'etat can be likened to the opening of a pandora's box in that it saw the unleashing of political ideas which expressed independent political thinking. As seen in the attempt to form the Viti Levu Council of Chiefs and the Western Confederacy, these moves posed the first direct challenge to the 1990 Constitution and the formation of a new political party. On the whole they illustrated the complexities of Fijian political discourse and complicated the attempt for Fijian political unity as espoused by the Fijian Administration through its political elites in eastern and northeastern Fiji.

²⁹ Butadroka, S. "Bose Levu Vakaturaga", in Paper for the Bose Levu Vakaturaga e Viti Levu, September 9-11, 1991, Cuvu village, Nadroga: 6. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

³⁰ Interview with Ratu Jovesa Sovasova, Vitogo village, Ba Province.

The 1990 Constitution

During his speech to the fifth "Bose ni Turaga"³¹ in 1990, the Interim Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, stated:

E na gauna e sureti au kina na turaga na Peresitedi e na mua ni yabaki 1987 me'u mai liutaka na Matanitu, au raica ka vakabauta ni gagadre ni lewe iViti e na gauna ko ya, me qaravi na bula vaka ilavo me kune tale kina na ivurevure ni lavo ki na veivuvale kei na Matanitu me rawa kina na veiqaravi ni tiko vinaka, bulabula ka sautu. Na ikarua ni ka e gadreva na lewe iViti me buli e dua tale na yavu ni Vakavulewa ka rokovi kina na gagadre ni Taukei ni Vanua.
³²

When I was invited by the President of the Republic of Fiji towards the end of 1987 to be the leader of government I realized and believed that there were two main desires of Fiji citizens at the time. The first was to tend to Fiji's economic development so that families as well as government can find a good, healthy and prosperous life again. The second desire was the need to formulate another Constitution that would respect the needs of indigenous Fijians.

It was envisioned that the ultimate resolution for Fijian political disunity, which led to the Alliance electoral defeat in 1987, was the promulgation of a new constitution. This was aimed at maintaining Fijian political dominance. However, within Fijian society, this implied the dominance of a few political elites. The Constitution also marked the return of the old eastern and northeastern order in the appointment of Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau as the first President and his consequent appointment of Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara as first Prime Minister after Fiji was declared a Republic on October 7, 1987.³³ Such decrees legalized and sealed the status of the two Tovata chiefs. They did not only have customary roles as chiefs in their vanua and matanitu but also became state chiefs through

³¹ The "Bose ni Turaga" or Council of Vanua Chiefs first met at Nadave in Bau on January 15, 1987, approximately four months prior to the execution of the first military coup by Major General Sitiveni Rabuka. The Council included all Vanua Chiefs throughout Fiji. The formation of this chiefly body was aimed at facilitating the recommendations of Rodney Cole (See Cole Report) regarding the role of chiefs in recommended changes to the Fijian Administration, as well as the role of chiefs in customary living. See also Cole, V. R., Levine, S.I. and Matahau, A.V. 1984. *The Provincial Administration: A Review*. Pacific Islands Development Programme, East West Centre, Honolulu, Hawaii.

³² Nodra Vosa na Gone Turaga na Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, E na ikalima ni Bose ni Turaga, 1990. Suva, Fiji: 11-12 (Address by the Hon. Interim Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara during the fifth meeting of the Council of Vanua Chiefs, 1990, Suva, Fiji: 11-12. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

³³ Government of the Republic of Fiji Decree No.22. *Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji*, 25th July 1990: 497.

the sanction of their official roles by state decrees. The interweaving of these two roles strengthened their power base amongst their people. Additionally, it presented the chiefly institution in a new light.

The 1990 constitution, amongst other things, also contained immunity provisions which enabled total pardon for the coup leader and others who carried out orders of the coup leader.³⁴ Again, in this light, if the coups were actually executed for the promotion of traditional interests and rivalries, then modern state decrees through the constitution were used to legalize such actions. In carrying out orders of the coup leader, the 1990 Constitution considered that persons who:

Had shown allegiance to the coup leader and obediently carried out instructions and orders of the Fiji Military Government established by the coup leader, shall be immune from criminal and civil responsibility in respect of the commission of any offence under the Penal Code or the breach of any law of Fiji and in respect of any damage or injury to property or person resulting either directly or indirectly from the two military coup d'etat and no court shall entertain any action or make any decision or order, or grant any remedy or relief in any proceedings instituted against any member aforesaid in relation thereto.³⁵

The immunity provision of the 1990 Constitution pre-empted any state responsibility to its citizens by pardoning the perpetrators of criminal activities and relieving itself of giving any compensation, monetary or otherwise, to those who suffered through coup-related activities. These provisions became a law unto themselves when it was further stated that the immunity section "shall not be reviewed or amended by Parliament".³⁶

The immunity provision of the 1990 constitution had serious future implications within Fijian society. Perhaps the major effect of the pardon accorded to Rabuka and his team of coup-makers was that it sent the wrong message to "future destabilisers" in Fiji that future coup makers too could be pardoned. This was realized in George Speight's coup in May 2000. It further exposed the weakness of the modern state in post-colonial societies, as modern state laws

³⁴ Chapter XIV, Immunity Provisions 164 (1). *Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji*, 25th July, 1990: 152.

³⁵ Chapter XIV, Immunity Provisions: 164 (2). *Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji*, 25th July, 1990: 152.

³⁶ See Chapter XIV, Immunity Provisions. *Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Fiji*, 25th July 1990: 153.

could be conveniently utilized to promote “personal interest’ in the name of “protecting culture or tradition”.

The promotion of Fijian political unity through the 1990 Constitution was also attempted through its electoral provision. This was done through a number of inter-related strategies such as the eradication of the cross-voting provision which enabled cross voting amongst different ethnic groups. All seats were contested on the communal roll, in the process strengthening ethnic politics. Among Fijians, only five out of the thirty-seven seats were allocated to those in urban areas. The following table shows the allocation of parliamentary seats in each of the fourteen Fijian provinces under the 1990 constitution.

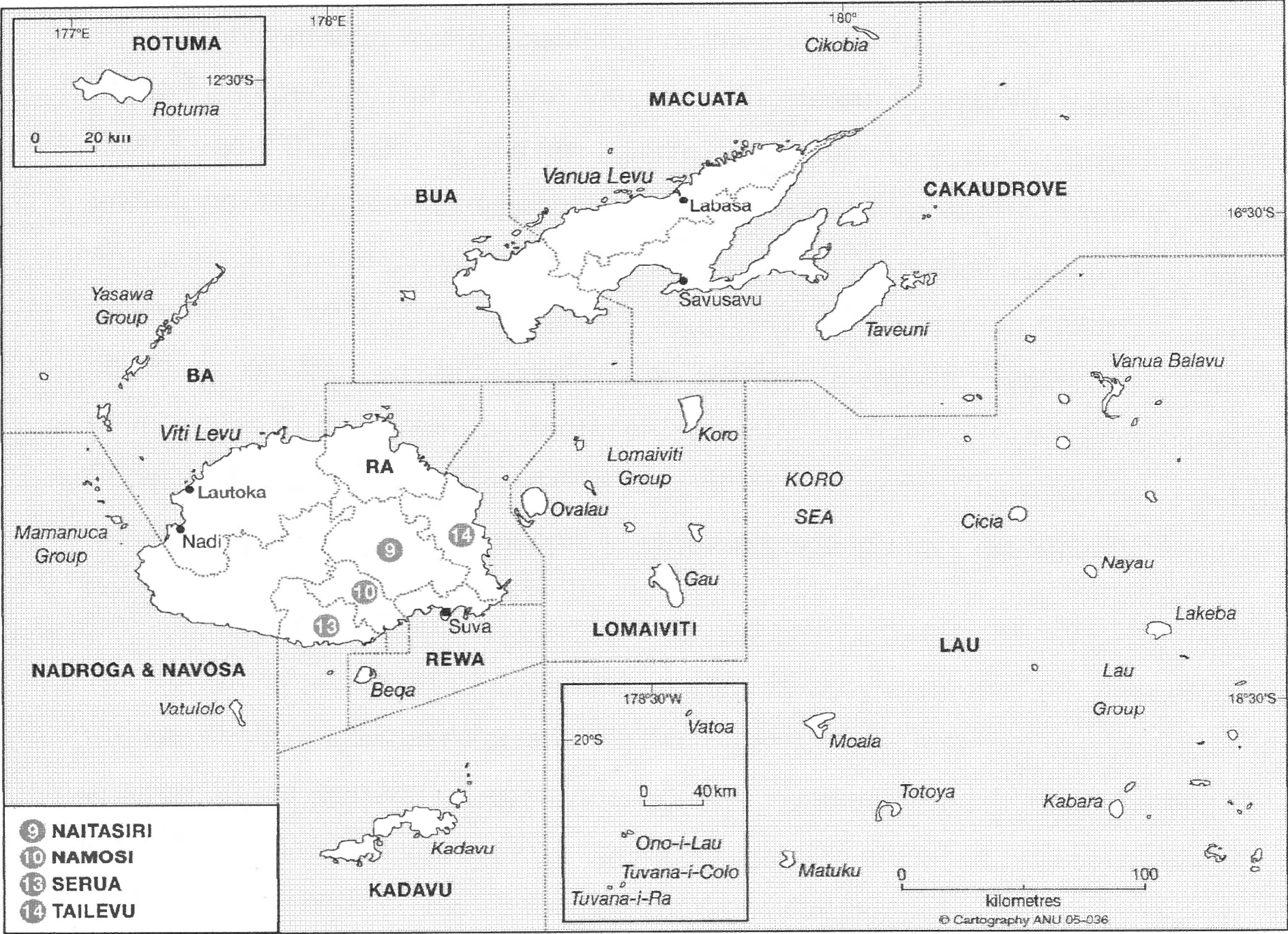
Table 25: Allocation of Provincial Seats in the 1990 Constitution

Province	Number of Parliamentary Seats
Ba	3
Bua	2
Cakaudrove	3
Kadavu	2
Lau	3
Lomaiviti	2
Macuata	2
Nadroga/Navosa	2
Naitasiri	2
Namosi	2
Ra	2
Rewa	2
Serua	2
Tailevu	3
Total Number of Seats	32

(Source: *Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Fiji*, 25th July 1990: 49)

Within the fourteen provinces are fourteen constituencies which produced different numbers of parliamentarians, as seen in the table above. **(See map on Fijian provincial constituencies in the 1990 Constitution)**. The assumption behind the over-allocation of parliamentary seats to the provinces was based on

FIJIAN PROVINCIAL CONSTITUENCIES UNDER THE 1990 CONSTITUTION



See Appendix B for 1990 Constituency Boundaries

the belief that rural Fijians were easier to control through the Fijian Administration. This would have led to the concentration of power in the hands of the provincial elites. However, the use of the Fijian Administration to facilitate party politics became a dilemma in Fijian society as many Fijians regarded the decision as problematic. This decision was contradictory in the sense that the Fijian Administration was an institution of the state for the overall development of the Fijian people. The decision was an authoritarian attempt to subjugate all Fijians under the authority of a few Fijian elites. Additionally, the strategy had an underlying assumption that people in the provinces were easier to manipulate and control. In the province of Tailevu for example, the allocation of three parliamentary seats in one constituency continued the dominance of the chiefdom of Bau in provincial party politics. Between 1960 and 1987 membership of the House of Representatives for the Tailevu Fijian Communal Constituency was the traditional privilege of Bauan chiefs. This was always not well received by chiefs and people in other larger and more resourceful vanua like Verata in northern Tailevu.³⁷

The constitutionalisation of communal politics directly extended the impact of various levels of internal colonialism within Fijian society. It perpetuated the rule of a few. In the long term it aggravated internal rivalries and contributed directly to the formation of alternative Fijian political parties to articulate political dissent. The thinking behind the formation of the Council of Chiefs-sponsored "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei" (SVT) Party was based on the perpetuation of oligarchy rule within Fijian society. It was an attempt at maintaining Fijian political unity through the somewhat fragmented eastern and northeastern Fijian orthodoxy. However, these political developments were countered by the emergence of political organizations and political parties in direct defiance of such development. On the whole it challenged the legitimacy claim of the SVT as an overarching Fijian political party.

The Formation of the "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei" (SVT) Party and Rabuka's Political Leadership

Within Fijian society, there were two ensuing results of the promulgation of the 1990 Constitution and its electoral provisions. The first was the formation of a

³⁷ See chapter three.

Fijian political party to replace the Soqosoqo iTaukei or the Fijian Association and the second was the role of the political party to unite all indigenous Fijians under one political umbrella. What was peculiar about the formation of the SVT was the way in which the electoral provision of the 1990 Constitution was already designed for the formation of such a political party. By June 1990 discussions were under way within the Bose Levu Vakaturaga on the need to form a new Fijian political party.³⁸ A committee which was formed to explore the avenues and foundation for the formation of a new political party stated that:

The need to form a Fijian political party has arisen following the reluctance of the leader of the Alliance Party to continue in office following the military coups of 1987 and the subsequent promulgation of the Republican Constitution which effectively introduces a new system of representative democracy based on races for the future of Fiji. It is felt that his [Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's] reluctance to continue in office has come about because of the effective neutralization of multi-racialism upon which the Alliance Party had tried to run the nation in the first 17 years of independent nationhood from 1970 to 1987.³⁹

The committee also discussed that the Bose Levu Vakaturaga, in June 1990, had approved the establishment of a new political party for indigenous Fijians. The new party was intended to promote and protect the interests and aspirations of indigenous Fijians. Following the two military coups of 1987, the need to form a new political party became a desperate issue to mostly eastern and northeastern Fijian political elites. They reckoned that emerging problems within Fijian society needed immediate rectification as they challenged the foundation of Fijian unity. This unity was assumed to have been a given within the multiple cultural realities of Fijian society.

³⁸ See "Bose Ni Turaga" – Pepa BNT1/91, 17-18 Epereli, 1991. Keba ni Mataivalu, Nabua, Suva. See also "Na iTukutuku Mai na Bose Levu Vakaturaga" 7-8 March, Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Suva: 1. (File C.35/6/5). Typed manuscripts in the personal collection of the researcher.

³⁹ "Fijian Political Party Notes", June 1990. A Discussion Paper prepared by a Ministry of Fijian Affairs Committee for the Formation of a New Fijian Political Party after the 1987 Military Coups. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher: 1.

The committee further declared that:

Factionalism, provincialism and the 4th Confederacy issues have reared their ugly heads to compound the already deteriorating state of Fijian unity. The Fijian Association had as its main ideology the promotion of harmonious co-existence in Fiji, subordinated only to the interests and aspirations of the Fijian people. The Fijian Association was run and administered by strong believers in the traditional and customary Fijian elitism ...The advent of democratic values into the Fijian social system has introduced a new factor which, if not addressed properly, could effectively lead to the decline and demise of traditional (inherited) Fijian leadership.⁴⁰

The above statements constitute some of the fundamental concerns of the Fijian political elites which contributed to the thinking behind the attempt to establish an overall Fijian political party for indigenous Fijians. A new Fijian party was predicted as a solution to Fijian problems, both traditional and modern in nature. This structural functionalist perspective of Fijian society assumed that the Fijian social structure was uniform and static in nature. It concealed the orthodoxy and the political ideology which were promoted through such social construction. A one-party system was assumed to be the solution to Fijian disunity. The desire by western Fijians to form their own confederacy, for example, was considered in a negative light and not as a natural right. Neither was this problem considered in a broader historical context, let alone in terms of western Fijians' traditional political independence. An imposed political party in this context was intended to gloss over cultural diversity and structural contradictions in Fijian society. A deconstruction of unity as imagined by the committee, implied the subjugation of all indigenous Fijians from different vanua under the eastern and northeastern socio-political hierarchy.

There are a number of things which emerge from the attempt to promote unity and traditional ambitions through party politics. Firstly, political parties are driven by ideological competitions and as such are more prone to rekindling traditional rivalries and dissent. Secondly, the assumption is ahistorical in nature and it overlooks, deliberately or otherwise, that the concept of Fijian unity is a colonial social construction. It was created by various agents of change such as missionaries and later, colonizers, to simplify the complexities of the Fijian

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1990: 2-3.

social system for administrative convenience. The myth of Fijian unity as proposed by the Fijian Administration is an offshoot of the colonial myth of homogeneity, promoting a single form of cultural reality within Fijian society. Such thinking underlines the attempt to impose political unity through the formation of the BLV-sponsored "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei" (SVT) party.

Initially, the new political party was named "Soqosoqo ni Yavu Ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei" later shortened to "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei" (SVT). The name itself is roughly translated as "the Law-Making Organisation for indigenous Fijians". The new party with its officious-sounding name epitomized the desperate attempt to hold on to power or at least to show that the eastern and northeastern political elites were still in control. The name, "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei" did not only sound officious but was also aimed at creating an atmosphere of legitimacy and authority within Fijian society.⁴¹ The BLV and its political elites assumed that all Fijians would join the SVT, therefore it was decided by the Bose Levu Vakaturaga that funding for the SVT was to come from provincial donations. The BLV Council paper explains:

A veivosakitaki na uma ilavo me cakacakataki kina na tauyavu ni soqosoqo, ka vakadonui me sa na vaka oqo na cau mai na veiyasana: Tauyavu \$5,000 – Ba, Cakaudrove, Lau kei Tailevu. Tauyavu \$4,000 – Bua, Kadavu, Lomaiviti, Macuata, Nadroga/Navosa, Naitasiri kei Ra. Tauyavu \$2,000 – Rewa, Serua kei Namosi. Na cau oqori e dodonu me kumuni kina e \$54,000. E ra a cau sara na lewe ni bese ki na kumuni ilavo me baleta na tauyavutaki ni "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei" ka ra solia kina e na yakavi o ya e dua na udolu rua na drau limasagavulu na dola (\$1,250.00).⁴²

There was discussion for a sum of money upon which the political party was to be founded. It was agreed that the following provincial contributions were to be adopted: \$5,000 – Ba, Cakaudrove, Lau and Tailevu; \$4,000 – Bua, Kadavu, Lomaiviti, Macuata, Nadroga/Navosa, Naitasiri and Ra; \$2,000 – Rewa, Serua and Namosi. It was anticipated that \$54,000 was to be collected from provincial contributions. To start the SVT fund, members of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga contributed one thousand two hundred and fifty dollars (\$1,250.00).

⁴¹ The Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party was also created through the Fijian Administration.

⁴² "Na itukutuku ni Bose Levu Vakaturaga". Epereli, 1991. Tabacakacaka iTaukei, Suva: 3 (File: C.35/6/5). Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

By this time it was clear that like the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party, the SVT was also using the Fijian Administration to reach grassroot Fijians in the fourteen provinces throughout the group. Additionally, authority was imposed from above through the provincial network of the Fijian Administration. Like the Alliance Party, it was another Fijian party which was imposed from above. The structure of the party as stated in its constitution resembled that of the Fijian Administration. The BLV Council Paper states:

Sa na tauyavutaki e na veikoro, tikina, yasana kei na koro
 Vakavavalagi na taba ni soqosoqo.⁴³

Branches of the political party shall be established in villages, districts and provinces.

The Fijian social structure was viewed as a ready-made political power base for the party, irrespective of whether those in the villages subscribed to the ideology of the party or not. The table below shows the number of villages in each of the fourteen provinces in Fiji in which SVT branches were to be established.

Table 26: Yasana or Provinces and Fijian Villages

Province (Yasana)	Number of Villages (Koro)
Ba	107
Bua	54
Cakaudrove	133
Kadavu	75
Lau	72
Lomaiviti	73
Macuata	106
Nadroga/Navosa	120
Naitasiri	91
Namosi	26
Ra	91
Rewa	53
Serua	24
Tailevu	139
TOTAL	1,164

(Source: *Provincial Profile*, 1995: 12-20)

Funding and membership drives were done through the Fijian Administration network. Such moves created further problems for the political elites as educated, urban and non-conformist Fijians after a while regarded such political strategies as dictatorial and authoritarian. It was regarded as a blatant attempt

⁴³ "Soqosoqo Vakapolitiki ni Taukei –Yavu ni Vakatulawa". Epereli 1991. Tabacakacaka iTaukei, Suva: 2. (File C.28/7). Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

to impose the power of the political elites on grassroot Fijians. Since a number of indigenous Fijians have always regarded the provincial system as an irrelevant institution which is dominated by paternalism and cronyism, a party formed through such a system was equally viewed in a negative light.

During the Bose Levu Vakaturaga meeting in March, 1991, the Tui Naviti in Yasawa,⁴⁴ Ratu Belo Vuki Rauga, who was a chiefly representative to the Council from Ba province, expressed the support of the people of Ba for the SVT. However, concurrent with this show of support was the formation of Tora's All National Congress (ANC) Party also in the province of Ba.⁴⁵ This contradicted Ratu Vuki's show of support in the BLV. Situations such as these are not uncommon in Fijian society and this can be explained in a number of ways. Perhaps, first and foremost is the recognition of Fijian cultural diversity, more so in western vanua like those in Ba, Nadroga/Navosa and Ba. Ratu Vuki, a chief from a different vanua, could not legitimately represent the views of chiefs and people of other vanua. His status as a member of the BLV did not have any customary grounding of its own. Although the institution is generally recognized by all indigenous Fijians, its power as an institution is derived wholly from the state, which created it in the first place. As a traditional institution of rule, it does not have customary grounding in the vanua. Individual chiefly representatives to the BLV such as the Tui Naviti have their traditional areas of jurisdiction from which they derive their chiefly power. However, to try and extend this traditional mandate to other vanua outside of their sphere of influence within the BLV was tantamount to political suicide. Shows of independent social behaviour, rooted in culture, are common in egalitarian vanua found in Western Viti Levu as well as other parts of the Fiji group which do not over-emphasise hierarchy.

Added to cultural diversity, the onslaught of modernity has influenced individual decisions. This was a challenge for a party like the Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei which was imposed on the people. The SVT was formed specifically to safeguard and promote the rights of indigenous Fijians. It was intended to be the political vehicle of collective Fijian aspirations as put forward by the leader

⁴⁴ The Yasawa Islands belong to the western province of Ba.

⁴⁵ "Na iTukutuku mai na Bose Levu Vakaturaga" 7-8 Maji. Tabacakacaka iTaukei, Suva: 2. (File: 35/6/5). Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

of the 1987 military coups, Major General Sitiveni Rabuka, who became the first president of the party when it was launched. Given Fijian cultural diversity, a deconstruction of Fijian rights and aspirations weakened such “all encompassing” and all “embracing claim”.

The SVT's popularity in its first few years was due solely to its establishment through the apparatus of the state, in this case through a constitutional change in the electoral system and through the sanction of the Fijian Administration and the Bose Levu Vakaturaga. At the village level, people accepted the party because it was imposed from above through the system of Fijian Administration. In reality, there was not much choice for the people as orders were imposed from above for acceptance. As mentioned in earlier chapters, grassroot Fijians since the establishment of the Matanitu iTaukei in 1875 understood the world outside their social system through the influence of the institution.

State-Directed Political Development Through the SVT

The formation of the SVT marked a time which can be referred to as a period of “state-directed political development”. This involved the deliberate formulation of a constitution which amongst other things influenced the direction of party politics. It re-strengthened ethnic politics as a solution to perceived Fijian political marginalisation. The formation of the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party was not as well planned as a wholly Fijian political party like the SVT. In reality, the idea form the SVT arose out of state intervention in party politics through a coup d’etat and the imposition of a constitution that promoted the creation of such a political party.

The thinking behind the formation of the party originated from within the Bose Levu Vakaturaga (BLV) during their June 1990 meeting. After discussions in the BLV, the idea was taken to the Ministry of Fijian Affairs where it was finally endorsed.

The minutes of the BLV meeting from April 17-18, 1991 stated that:

Na Bose Levu Vakaturaga ka a vakayacori ena Jiune 1990, a vakadonui kina me tauyavutaki e dua na isoqosoqo vakapolitiki ni Taukei. A kau na lewa oqo ki na Matabose ni Veika Vakaitaukei me cakacakataka, ka digitaka kina e dua na Komiti, e ratou lewena na lewe ni Matabose ka vakaitikotiko e Suva, me nodratou itavi na vakarautaka e dua na ituvatuva ni gacagaca kei na idavodavo vakacakacaka ni kena tauyavutaki ka cicivaki, na isoqosoqo vakapolitiki ni Taukei.⁴⁶

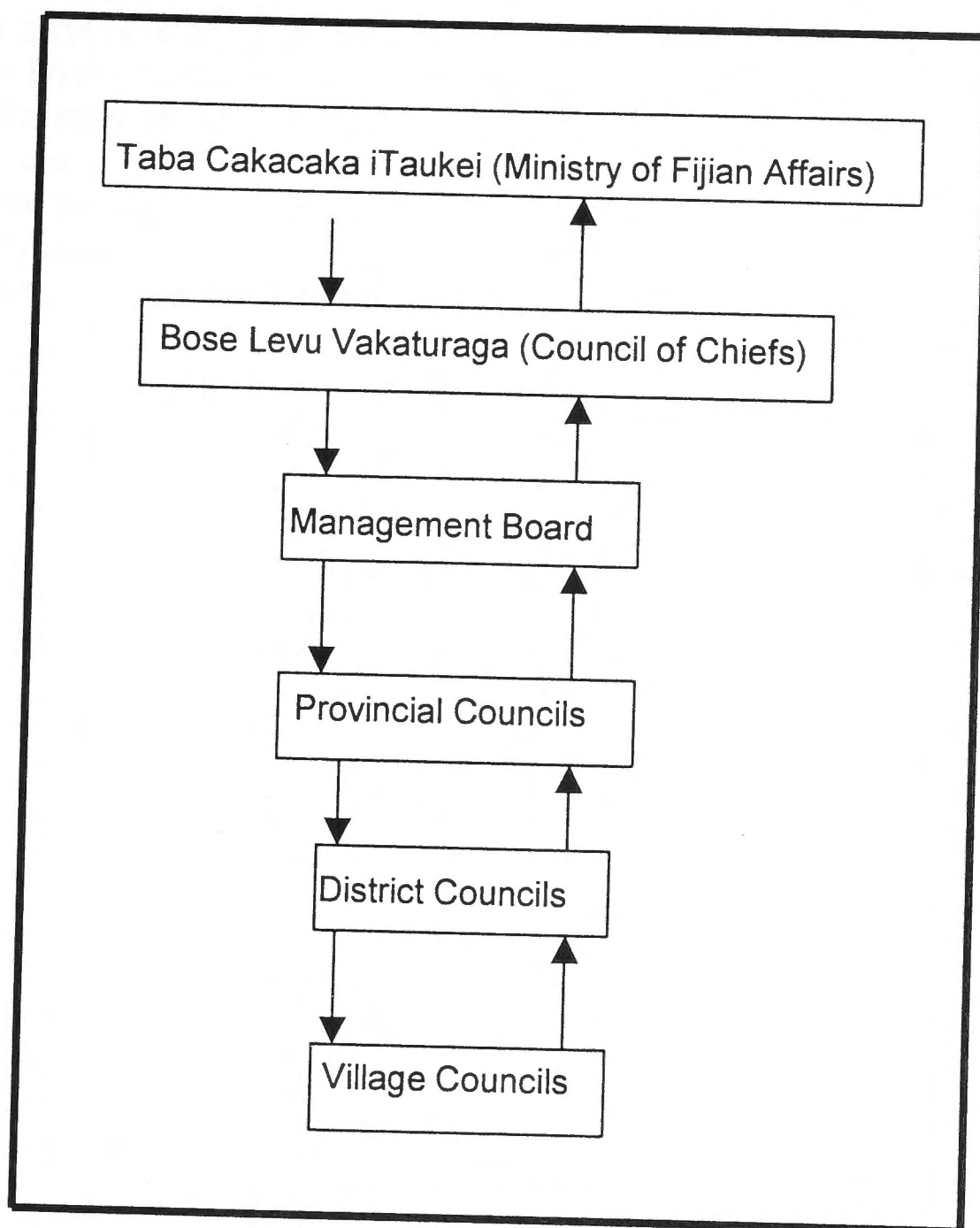
The BLV meeting in June, 1990 had endorsed the formation of a Fijian political party. The decision was taken up to the Ministry of Fijian Affairs to arrange for a committee. The Ministry constituted a committee which was composed of members of the Fijian Affairs Board who resided in Suva. Their task was to prepare an organizational structure and programme of work for the new Fijian political party.

This thesis argues that state-directed Fijian political development commenced with the 1987 military coups and the promulgation of the 1990 Constitution with its special provisions which sanctioned the 1987 coups.

It contributed directly to the formation of the SVT through its electoral provision which strengthened communal voting and allocated the majority of seats to the provinces. The existence of the SVT as a political party was both legitimized and strengthened by the authority of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga as an institution of the state. Initially, within Fijian society, the acceptance of SVT as a political party became inevitable considering the nature of its establishment. Its link to the state legitimized its existence and also authorized it as the official representative of indigenous Fijians. State-led intervention in party politics completed the cycle of legitimacy between the state, the SVT and the Fijian people. Considering the complex nature of Fijian society and culture, perhaps, one of the intended and fundamental goals in designing such a political model was to enable its overall acceptance by indigenous Fijians. This political endeavour worked only for a few years when contradictions re-surfaced, causing the decline of the party. The diagram below illustrates the link between, the state, the SVT and grassroot Fijians

⁴⁶ "Bose ni Turaga: Soqosoqo Vakapolitiki ni Taukei". BNT 3/91 17-18 ni Epereli, 1991. Tabacakacaka iTaukei, Suva: 1. (File: C.28/7). Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher.

Figure 15: SVT Party Structure



What differentiated the SVT from other Fijian political parties was its direct link to the state through the Matanitu iTaukei or Ministry of Fijian Affairs. The nature of its formation implies the continued promotion of dominant political beliefs within the system of Fijian Administration. This further implied the domination of the elites who have always controlled the institution. Ro Epeli Mataitini, President of the SVT in 2002, explained:

E na gauna sa vakayacori.oti kina na vuaviri ni 1987, O Ratu Mara sara ga sa tukuna me sa kua na Fijian Association, me sa tauyavu e dua tale na noda isoqosoqo na iTaukei me gusu ni vosa vakapolitiki ni Bose Levu Vakaturaga. Qo o koya e a tauyavu kina na iSoqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei. Na kena a tauyavu o ya, e tolu na ka bibi e a vinakati kina. Me taqomaki keda vaka-kawa tamata na iTaukei, taqomaka noda qele kei na veika e da vakamareqeta. Me vakatorocaketaki keda na kawa iTaukei e na vuli, bisinisi kei na veicakacaka tale e so. Ka kena ikatolu ni ka e gadrevi meda taura na veiliutaki vakapolitiki na iTaukei.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Interview with Ro Epeli Mataitini, 22 October, 2002. Lomanikoro, Rewa.

After the coups in 1987, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara suggested the abrogation of the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party and to establish a new Fijian political party to be a mouthpiece for the Bose Levu Vakaturaga. This was the reason for the formation of the SVT. Three fundamental goals were hoped to be achieved through its formation: that it should protect indigenous Fijians as a people and also protect their land and other things that they value; that it should be able to introduce development in terms of education, business and other areas of work; that it should ensure that indigenous Fijians control political leadership.

While the SVT as a political party was imposed on indigenous Fijians, it implied that its ideology was not widely accepted nor the traditional interests which it represented and promoted. There were still elements of skepticism within Fijian society regarding the formation of the party. The formation of the party did not diminish unique peculiarities in political thinking based on cultural diversity as well as modern political influences which contributed to overall political dissent within Fijian society.

The SVT's acceptance was due more to its emergence in a period where there was ethnic polarization of political beliefs. In reality the practice of ethnic politics becomes dangerous when choices are no longer a personal option. This was the political situation which indigenous Fijians encountered through the formation of the SVT. Fijian sentiment about the formation of the political party, however, differed throughout Fiji, at least on the main island of Viti Levu where I conducted interviews between 1995 and 1996.⁴⁸ The sentiments of a number of western Fijian people regarding the nature of the formation of the SVT was best stated by a Nadi chief whom I interviewed in 1996. Ratu Nemia Vainitoba, of the Yavusa Navatulevu and chiefly herald of the Tui Nadi argued that:

Na kena tauyavutaki na SVT e tiko ga mai cake (Suva). E sega ni bau kau mai ki na yasayasa vaka-Ra. Na bese e yaco tiko ga mai Suva. Na lewa kece ni Matanitu e Viti e tiko ga mai na Vualiku, ia, na kaukauwa kei na bula ni Matanitu e Viti e tiko e na yasayasa vaka-Ra baleta ni yau lelevu taucoko e tiko kina, suka , paini, saravanua, koula. Na bula ni Matanitu e sega ni tiko mai na veiniu mai Lakeba, ia, ni sa yaco mai na veiliutaki ena Matanitu, era sa digitaki ga mai na vualiku kei Viti.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ See Durutalo, A. L. 1997. Provincialism and the Crisis of Indigenous Fijian Political Unity. M.A. Thesis. School of Social and Economic Development, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji: 156-168.

⁴⁹ Lakeba is Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's island in the Lau Group in eastern Fiji. The remark is made to imply a number of things: first, that small islands like Lakeba do not have much natural resources except for coconut trees; secondly that the over-dominance of eastern and northeastern Fijians like Mara in Fijian and Fiji's politics is not equitable with the natural

The formation of the SVT was done by those in the top echelons of power in eastern Fiji. The formation of the SVT party followed by various meetings was always done in Suva and never once were meetings decentralized to western Fiji. This is in spite of the fact that all major resources that the Fiji Government depends on are to be found in western Fiji, [Fiji Pine, Tourism and Gold mining industries].. It is most obvious that the survival of the Fiji government is not determined by some coconut plantation on the island of Lakeba. However, When it comes to government leadership, eastern Fijians dominate.

Indigenous Fijians also had different perspectives on state intervention in the formation of the SVT. While some groups, especially those who supported the 1987 military coups, viewed the formation of the SVT through the state and the Council of Chiefs in a positive light, others had their own reservations in terms of the origins and ideological grounding of the party. Ratu Tevita Momoedonu, a former Roko Tui Ba, whom I interviewed in 1995 stated that:

Indigenous Fijians are forced to recognize only one political party. The Bose Levu Vakaturaga (Council of Chiefs) proposal are taken right to Yavusa, village, district and provincial council meetings through the system of the Fijian Administration...there is total control in this situation. This political tactic totally eradicates the political freedom that one is entitled to within a democratic framework of leadership.⁵⁰

The formation of the SVT was also criticized by other Fijian political parties such as the Fijian Conservative Party (FCP).⁵¹ In an open statement to the Fijian newspaper "Na iLalakai", the President of the FCP categorically denounced the formation of the SVT. It informed Fijian voters of the dictatorial manner in which the SVT was formed. It also reminded Fijians that the SVT, which was an elite party aimed at replacing the Alliance, was established through the backing of the Fijian Administration, an institution of the state. The name itself was aimed at misleading the Fijian people into believing that this was the only legitimate party for indigenous Fijians. However, the FCP argued, that the SVT was just like any other party, the Christian Nationalist Party, Fiji Labour Party, National Federation Party or Party of National Unity, which was competing for Fijian votes.⁵² Through this statement, members of the Fijian Conservative Party were

resources that their vanua contributes to the Fiji government. See also Dr. Timoci Bavadra's campaign speech in Lal, B.V. 1992: 263-264.

⁵⁰ See interview with Ratu Tevita Momoedonu as quoted in Durutalo, A. L. 1997: 159.

⁵¹ This was a Fijian political group that was formed after the 1987 coups under the leadership of Viliame Savu.

⁵² "Saqata na FCP na iSoqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei", *Na i Lalakai*, 14 ni Maji, 1991. Suva, Fiji.

directly questioning the legitimacy claim of the SVT Party as the only voice of the Fijian people.

Additionally, the FCP reminded Fijian voters to be wary of the way in which the propaganda of the political elites through the SVT was to be disseminated amongst grass root Fijians. The President of the FCP, Viliame Savu, expounded:

E na baci kau vakavanua se vakalotu yani na kena i tukutuku ki vei kemuni na iTaukei ena veikorokoro me vaka e ratou a dau vakayacora voli na matanitu ni Alliance mo ni laki vakavorakitaki kina mo ni tokona. Ia, nanuma vinaka tiko ni sega ni dau waki vata na Vanua, Lotu kei na politiki. Na pati ka sa mai tavo oqo e isoqosoqo vaka-politiki ka na qito ga ena buturara ni politiki.⁵³

The message will be disseminated to indigenous Fijians in the villages through the Vanua or Lotu (Christianity), following the style of the Alliance government. You will be forced to give your support. However, you must remember that the Vanua, Lotu (Christianity) and politics can never be mixed. The new political party (SVT) is just another political organization which should operate according to the rules of party politics.

Within Fijian society the formation of the SVT seemed to imply mandatory membership by all indigenous Fijians as reflected in the use of the Fijian Administration resources and personnel to promote and disseminate its party interests. The FCP further argued that this was unlawful on a number of grounds. Firstly, that under the Fiji constitution, people were free to join any political organization of their choice. Grassroot Fijians did not have to join the SVT out of fear of being ostracized by members of their social groups. Secondly, employees of the Fijian Administration in the provinces, districts and villagers were public servants and it was illegal to promote the interests of certain political parties in their official capacities as civil servants. Likewise, it was also illegal to use their public offices for the promotion of certain political parties.

The Fiji Conservative Party reminded indigenous Fijians that those who formed the SVT were the old Alliance Party elites and voters should not be swayed by

⁵³ "Saqata na FCP na iSoqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei", *Na iLalakai*, 14 ni Maji, 1991. Fiji Times Ltd., Suva, Fiji.

their promises. These were the same people who have not bothered about Fijian resource development or, worse still, utilized publicly owned Fijian resources in whatever way they liked. While in power, they never cared about protecting things which indigenous Fijians valued. According to the Fijian Conservative Party:

Sa ira sara ga oqo era a dau matau na yalataki parataisi vei keda ena gauna ni veidigidigi. Ia, era dau dreti keda na iTaukei ki Eli meda laki kama bulabula ni sa dau oti na veidigidigi ka sa nodra na qaqa.⁵⁴

The political elites behind the formation of the SVT Party were the ones who used to promise paradise to us during elections. However, after their election victories they dragged us to burn alive in hell.

Opposition to the formation of the SVT Party within Fijian society was quite powerful as can be gauged from the various trends of thought which were expressed by dissenting voices. The alternative voices highlighted commoner Fijian understanding of party politics and their disapproval of the use of customs, traditions and the Lotu (Christianity) to persuade people to support elite-controlled political parties like the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party and the SVT. In the long term these types of dissent encouraged the formation of alternative Fijian political parties as a means of challenging the orthodoxy upon which certain political parties are founded. In 1991 Tora, who started political dissent in western Viti Levu by forming the Fijian Democratic Party as an alternative to the Fijian Association, formed the All National Congress (ANC) Party as an alternative to the SVT.

Tora's All National Congress (ANC)

The All National Congress was formed by a group of former Alliance members in western Viti Levu after they realized that the Alliance Party could not be resurrected after their 1987 electoral defeat. Ethnic polarization after the 1987 coup d'etat had seen the disintegration of the Alliance party. The majority of members of the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance party had gone on to form the SVT. Some members of the former Alliance Party who still believed in the promotion of a multi-ethnic political party gathered at Apisai Tora's village in Natalau, Sabeto, to explore the possibility of forming a new multi-ethnic political

⁵⁴ "Saqata na FCP na iSoqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei", *Na iLalakai*, 14 ni Maji, 1991. Fiji Times Ltd., Suva, Fiji.

party, similar to the Alliance. The 1987 President of the Nadi General Electors Alliance Branch, current parliamentarian Mick Beddoes, with Apisai Tora, were the initiators of this meeting. Approximately five hundred people attended the meeting and formed the All National Congress.⁵⁵

The formation of the ANC had again actively involved Apisai Tora. While Tora believed in overall Fijian political dominance, this did not mean subjugating the traditional political independence of the Yasayasa Vaka-Ra people to the control of eastern and northeastern Fijian political elites. This move brought Tora into direct confrontation with Mara, the interim Prime Minister, after the 1987 coups. Mara believed in the unity of indigenous Fijians behind the Bose Levu Vakaturaga-sponsored SVT party. Tora questioned Ratu Mara on the legitimacy of the SVT party in its attempt to force all indigenous Fijians to join it. Tora argued:

Sir, no offence meant to you Mr. Prime Minister, but this party [SVT] is a non-elected party and if people are free to join the SVT, why cannot I be involved with the ANC...This [SVT] has been decided by the Great Council of Chiefs.⁵⁶

Tora's political strategies promoted a "balance of power" role for western Fijian polities and their political elites'. After the coups in 1987, Tora's political involvement demonstrated the role of a "political middleman" or a "political entrepreneur" in Fijian party politics. His strategies through the flexibility of his political arrangements straddling western and eastern Fijian polities, outmanoeuvred the rigidity of traditional political barriers and the continuous attempt by eastern and northeastern Fijian political elites to dominate those from other regions of Fiji.

Tora's attempt to disassociate himself from his eastern and northeastern Fijian political allies, whom he joined in 1982, resulted in his being sacked by Ratu Mara from the interim administration on July 25, 1991. Mara's attempt to keep Tora in his political orbit resulted in his asking Tora three times not to form the ANC as it would have contradicted the pursuit of Fijian political unity through party politics. Upon realizing that Tora would not change, Mara chased Tora out

⁵⁵ Interview with the Hon. Mick Beddoes, Leader of the General Voters party, 14 September, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

⁵⁶ Interview with Apisai Tora, 5 June, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province.

of a meeting which they had and cosequently sacked him.⁵⁷ Such confrontations between Tora and Mara highlighted a number of things. The fall of the Alliance also ushered in the fragmentation of precarious political alliances which were based on equally ambitious politicians from different vanua. As a western Fijian, Tora did not recognize Mara's traditional chiefly authority. Tora, as a shrewd politician, understood that Mara was a desperate man and the defeat of his party implied the waning of his power. Mara, on the other hand, once again attempted to employ his authoritarian political strategy on Tora, which by now had lost its mana. The same strategy was used by Mara and Ganilau on dissidents like Viliame Savu in the early years of Fijian party politics.⁵⁸ Like saplings beneath a banyan tree, Mara's opponents never survived under his shadow in his heyday.⁵⁹

The ANC contested two general elections in 1992 and 1994. In the 1992 general election the ANC did not win a parliamentary seat. Tora lost in both elections. In the 1994 general election, the ANC managed to win only one seat in parliament and their member of parliament was David Pickering.⁶⁰ In 1993 Pickering voted with Josevata Kamikamica's group against Rabuka's budget, causing another general election in 1994.⁶¹ The ANC however, ceased to exist after 1994, and Tora initiated the move for two more political parties through the Ba provincial council prior to the 1999 and 2001 general elections. The formation of the ANC in western Viti Levu in 1991 continued the role of dissent in Fijian party politics. The attempt by the eastern and northeastern political elites to rearrange a fragmented order, even through a constitutional change, still could not bring about the much sought-after Fijian unity. The diagram below illustrate the main happenings, in terms of fragmentation, reconstruction and dissent in Fijian politics between 1987 and 1991.

⁵⁷ Interview with Apisai Tora, June 25, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province.

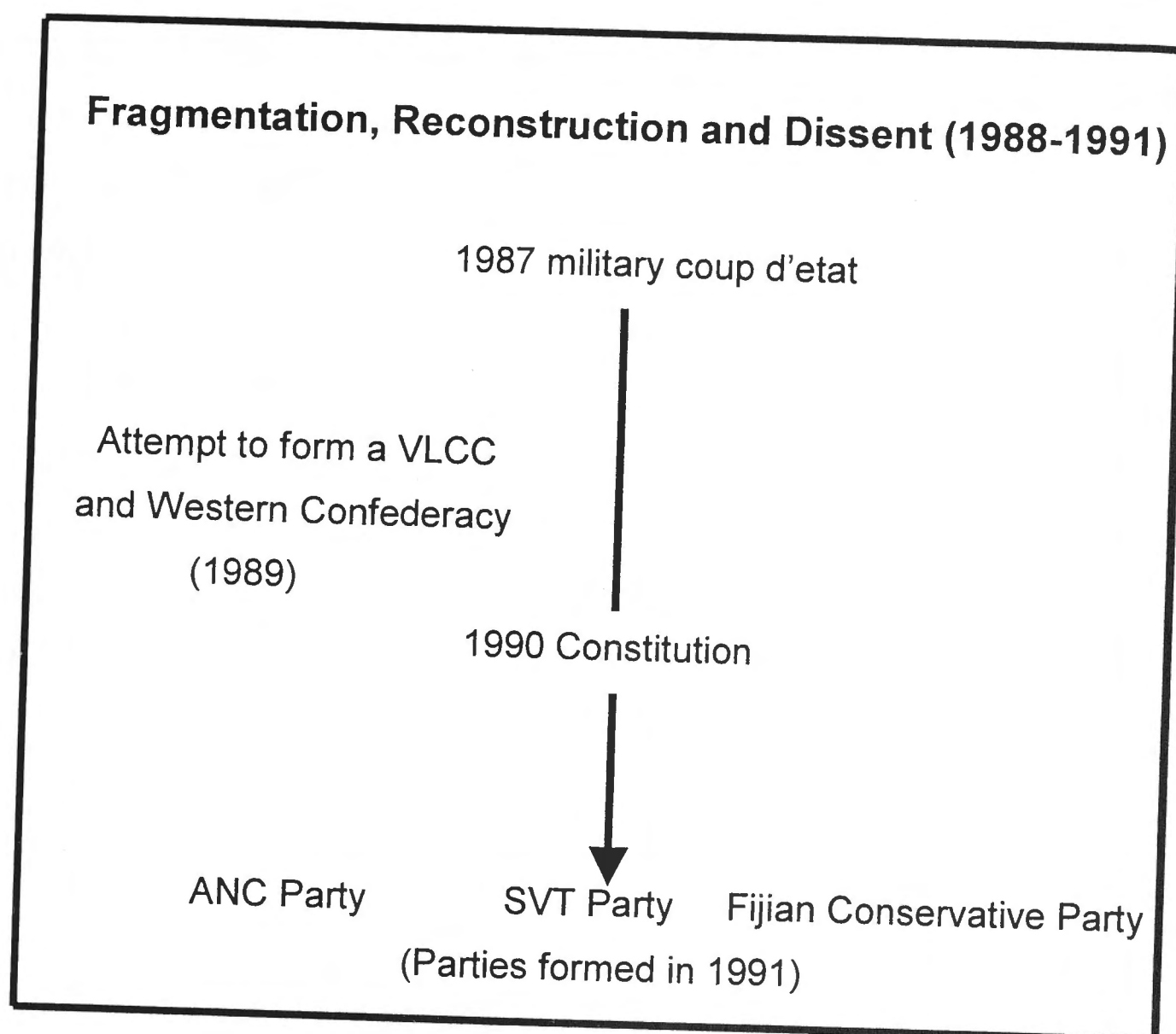
⁵⁸ Interview with Viliame Savu, Suva, Fiji.

⁵⁹ See also Lal, B.V. 1992: 262.

⁶⁰ For the 1992 General Elections Results see also *Fiji Republic Gazette*, Vol.6 (66). July 22, 1992: 1250 – 1283. For the 1994 General Elections Results see also *Electoral Commission Report* for January 1, 1994 to December 31, 1996. Parliamentary Paper No. 49 of 1997, Parliament of Fiji.

⁶¹ Interview with Mick Beddoes, 14 September, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

Figure 16: Fragmentation, Reconstruction and Dissent (1988-1991)



The attempt to form a Viti Levu Council of Chiefs with a western confederacy, as well as the formation of ANC as indicated in the diagram, indicate the continued expression of dissent in the period under study.

Chapter Summary

The 1987 coups enabled the imposition of the 1990 Constitution and the consequent formation of the "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei" (SVT) Party through the Fijian Administration. Through state intervention dynamic attempts occurred to re-construct the past through constitutional change and the formation of the SVT to replace the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party. The main argument which was used to rationalize such political strategy was the protection of the chiefly institution with its ensuing paramountcy of Fijian rights.

The demonstration of dissent in the form of an attempt to establish an alternative Viti Levu Council of Chiefs as well as a "Yasayasa Vaka-Ra" or Western Confederacy by 1989, marked the beginning of a common

consciousness amongst Viti Levu Fijians on the ambition of non-Viti Levu political elites. It demonstrated the complexity and difficulty of any attempt to impose unity in the context of Fijian cultural diversity. Additionally, the continued formation of alternative political parties, such as the ANC in 1991 and public pronouncements by the Fijian Conservative Party in the same year, further confirmed the articulation of Fijian political thinking and dissent in party formation.

While the infrastructure of the state-imposed SVT party was thorough and elaborate, the most crucial component was lacking; a common political philosophy and ideology acceptable to all indigenous Fijians in diverse socio-political groups. It was clear at this stage of Fijian political development that Fijians no longer accepted nor tolerated the colonial practise of imposing rule from above. Modern education and contact with other cultures had empowered Fijians further. Traditional chiefs could only impose their authority through legal rational authority. Extending power beyond such authority became problematic in a culturally diverse society. Mara's unceremonious dismissal by Viti Levu rebels in the 2000 George Speight coup best illustrates what is explained here.

Overall, the Third Phase of Party politics exposed internal leadership dilemmas within Fijian society. The formation of political parties as a means of dissent intensified into the fourth phase of Fijian party politics, as will be discussed in chapter seven. The involvement of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga in party formation reflected the seriousness of the situation and the desperation of a political elite to control power. This political strategy did not only expose the institution to more challenges but threw up critical leadership issues regarding the relevance of colonially-created institutions like the BLV. To what extent do traditional leaders in the institution use it to extend personal and social class interests? Phase Three of party politics has demonstrated the continued influence of the past in Fijian party politics through the traditional rationalization of the modern political discourse.

Introduction

This chapter, which covers the final phase of Fijian party politics, explores the rise and demise of the SVT Party between 1992 and 1999, as old and new Fijian parties challenged the SVT. Fiji's state-directed political development between 1987 and 1991 only served to exacerbate ethnic political polarization and the unintended intensification of intra-Fijian political rivalry through party politics. The SVT confronted its first political challenge very early in its life when leadership for the party was contested by the coup leader, Sitiveni Rabuka and Josevata Kamikamica, an experienced civil servant from the province of Tailevu.¹ Within Fijian society, this rivalry can also be understood in the context of a struggle for power between Rabuka, a Tovata Fijian and Kamikamica, a member of the Matanitu Kubuna. Initially, Rabuka's image as "the hero who saved the Fijian race" earned him overwhelming support from the majority of indigenous Fijians. After the general election of 1992, his endorsement by the party which he ousted from power in 1987, the Fiji Labour Party, gave him the upper hand in the power contest.

However, this victory for Rabuka and the SVT, as already mentioned, was short-lived, as opposition emerged early with the formation of western based alternative parties like Tora's All National Congress and Ratu Osea Gavidia's Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua (STV) Party. These two Fijian political parties together with the Christian Fijian Nationalist Party fielded candidates in the 1992 general election. The espoused Fijian unity through which the SVT was created was challenged very early after its formation.

The leadership tussle between Rabuka and Kamikamica finally resulted in the defeat of the 1994 Budget, leading to another general election in 1994. By this

¹ For a biography of Josevata Kamikamica, see Durutalo, A. 2001. "Josefata Kamikamica: Civil Servant Politician" in *20th Century Fiji: People Who Shaped This Nation*, Firth, S. and Tarte, D. (ed). University of the South Pacific, Suva: 193-194.

time, Kamikamica and his dissident group had formed a new political party called the Fijian Association. Although the SVT won this election, this was not to be a long-term monopoly. Unlike Mara's Alliance Party, which since 1966 enjoyed a twenty-year power monopoly, Rabuka's SVT only enjoyed a seven year grip on power. The decline of the old chiefly politicians was signaled by the defeat and disintegration of the Alliance Party. Bavadra through the Fiji Labour Party and later Rabuka through the coups, represented the emergence of "tawa vanua" or commoner leaders. Between 1992 and 1999, new Fijian political parties sprouted like mushrooms after a rainy day.

The Formation of the "Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua" (STV) Party

The Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua party was formed in the province of Nadroga/Navosa as a result of conflict over the selection of SVT candidates for the 1992 general election. After the formation of the SVT, branches were formed throughout the fourteen provinces. These branches facilitated the selection of SVT provincial candidates for the 1992 general election. In Nadroga/Navosa, the selection of provincial candidates for the election occurred prior to the formation of a provincial branch to oversee the selection process. Ilaitia Sarai and Leone Tuisowaqa's nomination was considered unfair by a group in the province which included high chief and "Ka Levu" Bulou Eta Vosailagi and veteran Nadroga politician, Ratu Osea Gavidi. Like the formation of the SVT, they considered the selection process dictatorial and argued that the members of the twenty-seven tikina or districts in the province should have contributed to the selection process. The ensuing conflict which emerged led to the formation of a new political party to challenge the SVT in the province of Nadroga/Navosa.² Like ANC, the formation of the SVT highlighted that western Fijians still considered the GCC-backed SVT an eastern and northeastern organisation.

The "iSoqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua" (STV) was formed by Ratu Osea and Bulou Eta Vosailagi, two high chiefs in the Vanua of Nakuruvakarua of Cuvu in Nadroga. Gavidi was the independent member of parliament for

² See Chambers, C. "Kurisaqila, Wong Back as SVT reps", in *The Daily Post*, March 20, 1992: 2.

Nadroga/Navosa between 1977 and 1982 and leader of WUF from 1981. The formation of STV again shows the ongoing attempt at expressing independent political thinking in western Viti Levu. Gavidī, like Apisai Tora, had been instrumental in the formation of western-based political parties as a means of expressing alternative views to resource development. While the politics of resource development were first actively pursued and confined to Nadroga/Navosa in the early 1970s, they later gained wider appeal amongst other Fijian polities. The same ideology was used in the formation of the Party of National Unity (PANU) in the province of Ba.³ The STV won the two Fijian Provincial Communal Parliamentary seats in the province of Nadroga/Navosa as shown in table 27. Although the party did not win any Fijian provincial communal seat in the 1994 general election, it managed to secure 37.5% of Fijian votes in the province of Nadroga/Navosa as shown in table 28.

Like other western-based political parties, the STV was localized within Nadroga/Navosa. The roots of dissent out of which western-based political parties emerged in the period under study, were grounded in customs and traditions unique to the cultures of western Fijians. In western Viti Levu, the attempt to extend the influence of a localized political party into the same region or into a different vanua, has not been successful. For instance, Gavidī's influence was localized in Nadroga while Tora's was localized in Ba. This is a direct reflection of the egalitarian and independent nature of western Fijian vanua and society. It explains the futility of any attempt to impose political influence in different vanua which are more or less independent of each other. The presence of traditional hierarchies in eastern and northeastern Fiji facilitated the domination of mainstream political parties like the Alliance Party. These parties used the linkages in the traditional social system as a network for modern party politics. Thus, support for the Alliance Party and later SVT, for instance, was enhanced by traditional vanua loyalties. The existence of social hierarchies facilitated the inter-linking of traditional and modern ways of politicking. In this context, traditional politics strengthened modern politics and served as a medium for enhancing it. Conversely, the same is true. That is, that modern competition through party politics exacerbated traditional forms of

³ Interview with the late Tui Vitogo, Ratu Jovesa Sovasova. November 11, 2002. Vitogo village, Ba.

politicking. On the whole, political parties articulated both modern and traditional interests. The table below shows the results of the general elections in 1992 in which the communal voting system was used.

Table 27: 1992 General Election Results: Fijian Provincial Communal and Urban Communal Constituencies

Constituency	Candidate/Political Party	Votes Polled by Winning Candidate	Total Votes Counted	No. of voters on roll/% who polled
Ba (FPC)	Ratu Ovini Bokini (SVT)	6,675	37,753	16,123 (81.42%)
	Ratu Serupepeli Naivalu (SVT)	6,282		
	Ratu Etuate Tavai (SVT)	6,656		
Bua (FPC)	Ratu Kavaia Tagivetaua (SVT)			
	Koresi Matatolu (SVT)			
Cakaudrove (FPC)	Ratu Inoke Kubuobola (SVT)	11,035	34,191	13,278 (86.93%)
	Viliame Gonelevu (SVT)	11,013		
	Sitiveni Rabuka (SVT)	11,216		
Kadavu (FPC)	Apaitia Seru (SVT)			
	Sefanaia Finau (SVT)			
Lau (FPC)	Filipe Bole (SVT)	5,025	15,548	6,355 (82.99%)
	Ratu Finau Mara (SVT)	5,024		
	Viliame Saulekaleka (SVT)	4,929		

Lomaiviti (FPC)	Joeli Kalou (SVT)	3,679	10,096	6,386 (81.30%)
	Taufa Vakatale (SVT)	4,251		
Macuata (FPC)	Emosi Vuakatagane (SVT)	5,159	12,083	7,301 (85.50%)
	Militoni Leweniqila (SVT)	4,030		
Nadroga/Navosa.(FPC)	Ratu Osea Gavidu (STV)	4,214	18,764	11,546 (83.10%)
	Mosese Tuisawau (STV)	4,098		
Naitasiri (FPC)	Ilai Kuli (SVT)	4,781	14,378	9,258 (80.73%)
	Solomone Naivalu (STV)	4,593		
Namosi (FPC)	Ratu Ifereimi Buaserau (SVT)	1,256	3,125	2,107 (81.40%)
	Kiniviliame Taukeinikoro (SVT)	1,274		
Ra (FPC)	Ratu Mesake Nacola (Independent)	2,214	11,527	7,137 (83.68%)
	Kolinio Qiqiwaqa (Independent)	1,998		
Rewa (FPC)	Sakeasi Butadroka (CFNP)	2,269	7,498	4,465 (85.02%)
	Ro Mosese Tuisawau (CFNP)	2,288		

Serua (FPC)	Viliame Narawa (SVT)	1,026	4,278	2,611 (85.10%)
	Lepani Tonitonivanua (CFNP)	970		
Tailevu (FPC)	J. Kamikamica (SVT)	6,608	30,498	12,800 (81.95%)
	Ratu William Toganivalu (SVT)	5,142		
	Ratu Timoci Vesikula (SVT)	6,476		
Suva City Fijian Urban	Jonetani Kaukimoce (SVT)	7,241	8,784	12,203 (72.67%)
Serua/Rewa Fijian Urban	Kelemedi Bulewa (SVT)	3,281	3,606	4,864 (74.63%)
Tailevu/Naitasiri Fijian Urban	Avolosi Biuvakaloloma (SVT)	9,148	11,567	16,164 (72.28%)
Western Fijian Urban	Ratu Viliame Dreunimisimisi (SVT)	3,175	6,898	9,105 (76.79%)
Northeast Fijian Urban	Ratu Josefa Dimuri (SVT)	1,621	1,756	2,279 (77.58%)

(Source: *Fiji Republic Gazette*, Vol. 6 (66). July 22, 1992: 1250 - 1283)

Results of the 1992 general election indicate that under the 1990 electoral provision, votes for members of the House of Representatives from within the Fijian Provincial Constituencies depended on the number of members from each of the 14 provinces. In the case of provinces which had three members for example, a voter had to cast his or her vote three times for the three preferences. Those with two representatives required two votes from each

elector in the constituency involved. Voting was generally on "party line". In the 1992 election the only provinces in which the SVT Party lost were Nadroga/Navosa, Rewa, and Ra. In Serua one seat was won by the Christian Fijian Nationalist Party (CFNP), formerly the Fijian Nationalist Party. While the result of the election indicated the SVT's overall victory, an important development was the continued expression of dissent resulting in five seats being won by non-SVT Fijians.

State-directed political development imposed a system which reinforced both clientelism and communalism. Within Fijian society, the SVT allowed for the election of weak candidates who otherwise would not have been elected into parliament on their own merit. This is a peculiar characteristic of Fijian party politics which emerged through the promotion of the SVT. There was no observable bridging process to link the expectations of Fijians who were rather forced to accept the SVT and the elites who spearheaded the formation of the party. In this context, party politics was more a medium for power control through clientelism and communalism rather than a medium for democratic representation and long-term socio-political and economic development for its members. This "missing link" became an inherent weakness of the SVT from the beginning.⁴

The attempt to keep all Fijian parliamentary seats under the SVT was frustrated when in November 1993, Josevata Kamikamica, an SVT member from Tailevu and other members of the SVT, voted against their party's budget, causing its collapse. Ro Epeli Mataitini, 2002 President of the SVT, declared that the weakness of the budget was exploited by the Kubuna faction of the party. This was done in reaction to what the group perceived as "Rabuka's poor leadership style" and also to settle traditional matanitu rivalry. The Kubuna faction of the SVT party had anticipated leadership of the party according to the traditional pecking order of the eastern and northeastern Matanitu hierarchy, where Kubuna sits at the apex. However, Rabuka's selection was considered a breach of traditional protocol and became a source of deep animosity.⁵

⁴ See also Ball, A.R. and Peters, B.G. 2000. *Modern Politics & Government* (6th Ed). Macmillan Press, London: 98.

⁵ Interview with Ro Epeli Mataitini. October 22, 2002. Lomanikoro, Rewa.

This began the power contest and leadership rivalry within the SVT after its formation in 1991. Initially, conflict between chiefly and commoner leadership surfaced when Rabuka was voted leader over high chiefs like Ro Lady Lala Mara, traditional leader of the Matanitu of Burebasaga, for the leadership of the party.⁶ The nature of the formation of the SVT became problematic when different groups which subscribed to the party had different leadership expectations from it. From the beginning of his political career, Rabuka was caught in the cogs of ancient power rivalry amongst the chiefly elites of eastern and northeastern Fiji,⁷ those on whose behalf he executed the two military coups in 1987. Perhaps, he was merely required to carry out the coups and hand over political reign to the traditional leaders. It became evident through these power contests that although the party is a modern system for representative democracy and coups are a modern method of usurping power, since 1987 such modern mediums have been utilized to articulate traditional rivalries and dissent within Fijian society.

Josevata Kamikamica's desire to breakaway from the SVT was multi-pronged. On one hand was his disapproval of Rabuka's leadership style and on the other, was his desire to promote the interests of his Kubuna chiefs. Since 1987 Kubuna chiefs had increasingly felt marginalized by the dominance of Tovata chiefs and people in the post-coup governments.⁸

Kamikamica's "Fijian Association Party" (FAP): An Expression of Kubuna Against Tovata

The defeat of the 1994 Budget in the November 1993 parliamentary sitting led to the formation of the Fijian Association Party and also to another round of general election in 1994. Kamikamica and his political allies had been concerned with what they considered Rabuka's overall "poor leadership style", economically and otherwise. After the defeat of the budget, Kamikamica expounded:

⁶ Interview with Ro Epeli Mataitini, October 22, 2002. Lomanikoro, Rewa.

⁷ See *The Fiji Times*, March 20, 1992, "Tailevu Chiefs Slam Rabuka": 1.

⁸ Interview with Inosi Tawakedrau, 10 October, 2002. Nausori, Fiji.

Take the budget. He [Rabuka] could have resolved that very simply...I faced a similar situation when he handed [the government] over after the coups. He didn't hand over because he respected the chiefs. He handed over when the economy was completely down. He couldn't establish our trading and diplomatic links with other countries...from the way he was carrying on – it was like a political time bomb.⁹

Differences between Kamikamica and Rabuka were complex in nature: transcending personal, traditional and professional boundaries. While Rabuka is from the Matanitu of Tovata and was a career soldier all his life, Kamikamica was from the Matanitu of Kubuna and was a highly educated Fijian. He was a professional in his own right and was a self-made leader. His academic qualifications in commerce and management gained him professional recognition in the region. Kamikamica had also contributed extensively to Fiji as a long-term civil servant in Mara's government. The difference in professional achievement and leadership vision between the two was summed up by Kamikamica when he argued:

He [Rabuka] cannot have everything his own way. Since the coups, he's had the habit of taking whatever he wants...He should work for what he takes and not simply take it because he has the power.¹⁰

Although a highly educated Fijian, Kamikamica came from Dravo in the Vanua of Bau and was brought up in the custom of respect and the maintenance of one's role in the traditional system. However, his desire to uplift the political status of his marginalized chiefs became a challenge when the chiefly clans on Bau and in the province of Tailevu as a whole were divided in their support between Kamikamica's Fijian Association and Rabuka's SVT.¹¹ The chiefly Mataiwelagi household supported the SVT while their close relatives of Naisogolaca supported the Fijian Association Party. Ratu Viliame Dreunimisimisi and Ratu Tu'uakitau Cokanauto of the Naisogolaca household were office bearers in the Fijian Association Party. Cokanauto became a Fijian Association member of the House of Representative from Tailevu in the 1999 general election, defeating his cousin, Adi Litia Cakobau, member of the Mataiwelagi household and SVT party. As already mentioned, competition in

⁹ See *The Review*, February, 1994: 25.

¹⁰ See *The Review*, February 1994: 24.

¹¹ Interview with Inosi Tawakedrau, 10 October 2002, Nausori, Fiji.

modern party politics activates and exacerbates old rivalries at different levels of Fijian society, from the matanitu to chiefly households.¹²

When the Fijian Association Party was launched in 1993, House of Representative member from Naitasiri, Dr Alifereti Dewa and members from Lau, Ratu Finau Mara and Viliame Saulekaleka, joined Kamikamica in the new party.¹³ Kamikamica had openly declared the gradual disintegration of the SVT party after the formation of the Fijian Association.¹⁴ The main objectives of the Fijian Association Party as stated in its constitution were to establish a peaceful and prosperous nation; to promote the welfare of all Fiji citizens taking special regard for indigenous Fijians; to provide support for Fijian socio-political and economic development through self help or in association with other communities in Fiji; to provide the Fijian Association members with the services of a well-organised political organization; to select and aid candidates for elections to local government bodies as well as being candidates for elections to the House of Representatives; where circumstances allowed, to be able to collaborate with other political parties or political organizations with similar interests.¹⁵

The 1994 General Election

By the time of the 1994 general election, it was evident that Fijian political dissent expressed through the formation of alternative Fijian political parties was directed against the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy in its new manifestation through the SVT. At least seven political parties and independent candidates took part in the 1994 general election. These included the "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei" (SVT), Fijian Association Party (FAP), Fijian Nationalist Party (FNP), All National Congress (ANC), Fiji Labour Party (FLP), "Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua" (STV), National Democratic Party (NDP) and independent candidates (IND). Table 3 shows the percentage of votes polled by Fijian political parties in the 1994 General elections.

¹² See also Durutalo, A. 2000. "Elections and the Dilemma of Indigenous Fijian Political Unity", in *Fiji Before the Storm: Elections and the Politics of Development*. Lal, B.V. (Ed). Asia Pacific Press, The Australian National University, Canberra: 88.

¹³ Ratu Finau Mara is the son of former Prime Minister and President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara.

¹⁴ See *The Fiji Times*, September 5, 1995: 1.

¹⁵ See The Constitution of the Fijian Association Party, Elections Office, Suva, Fiji.

Table 28: 1994 General Election: Fijian Provincial and Urban Constituencies – Votes Polled by Fijian Parties

FIJIAN PROVINCIAL	Valid Votes	SVT %	FAP %	FNP %	ANC %	FLP %	STV %	NDP %	IND %
Ba	11,769	55.8	2.8	1.1	40.3	-	-	-	-
Bua	4,428	88.2	2.8	1.2	-	-	-	-	7.8
Cakaudrove	10,550	93.3	6.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kadavu	3,855	96.9	2.2	0.9	-	-	-	-	-
Lau	4,957	41.9	57.8	0.4	-	-	-	-	-
Lomaiviti	4,815	84.6	2.8	4.1	-	-	-	-	8.5
Macuata	5,283	91.2	6.2	2.5	-	-	-	-	-
Nadroga/Navosa	8,719	48.5	-	-	13.9	-	37.5	-	-
Naitasiri	6,866	40.0	52.8	7.2	-	-	-	-	-
Namosi	1,650	80.2	-	17.4	-	-	-	-	2.3
Ra	5,392	24.9	2.6	18.2	-	-	2.4	-	51.9
Rewa	3,616	52.6	6.6	32.6	0.7	-	-	-	8.2
Serua	2,250	58.3	-	25.7	10.7	-	-	0.97	4.3
Tailevu	9,879	48.1	29.1	18.9	0.8	-	-	-	3.1
Total	84,029	62.7	14.5	6.8	8.4	0.1	3.2	0.02	4.3
FIJIAN URBAN									
Suva city	8,085	72.1	21.6	3.9	2.4	-	-	-	-
Serua/Rewa west	3,441	68.0	23.9	4.0	2.6	-	-	-	1.4
Tailevu/Naitasiri	9,977	69.9	25.1	-	4.9	-	-	-	-
Western Urban	6,008	61.7	12.0	5.8	8.6	5.1	-	-	6.9
Total	27,511	68.5	21.1	2.9	4.7	1.1	-	-	1.7
Grand Total	111,540	63.4	15.3	6.3	8.0	0.2	2.8	0.02	4.0

(Source: *Electoral Commission Report* for January 1, 1994 – Dec. 31, 1996)

The results of the 1994 general election indicated both the long term and newly emerging patterns of political dissent within Fijian society. Patterns of long term political dissent continued with the formation of yet new political parties in western Viti Levu. These included Gavidia's "Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua" (STV). Apisai Tora, although a converted Alliance supporter since 1982, distanced himself from the "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei" (SVT) to form

yet another western Fijian-based political party, the All National Congress (ANC). In the 1994 election 40.3% of Fijian voters in the province of Ba supported Tora's ANC while 37.5% of Fijian voters in the province of Nadroga/Navosa supported Gavidia's STV. Although these percentages were not clear majorities, they however indicated existing dissenting voices amongst western Fijians. They also highlighted the ongoing powerful influence of regionalism and kinship support system in modern party politics.

While the Fijian Association Party won only two seats in parliament in the 1994 election, a significant political development which emerged at this time was the challenge to the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy from within its own rank. The formation of the Fijian Association Party indicated further fragmentation of the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy which supported the rule of its powerful chiefly elites. Unity within the eastern and northeastern chiefly hierarchy became a contested ground through internal power rivalry within the modern political discourse. Within Fijian society, the much-acclaimed Fijian political unity, which all hoped would have been achieved through state-directed political development, was negated by the ongoing formation of alternative Fijian political parties.

However, the formation of the Fijian Association did not imply automatic support from all the members of the Kubuna Confederacy. The vanua of Bau, for example, as head of the Confederacy, was split in its support for the FAP and SVT as already explained. The split can be explained in a number of ways. On the one hand, a faction of the vanua had supported the coups and Rabuka's SVT in the hope of re-strengthening their traditional power in the eastern and northeastern hierarchy. With his military backing and control of government and resources, they hoped for a share in the loot. Chiefly members of the SVT supporters also expressed interest in competing in the general election. On the other hand, Mara's support of Kamikamica did not help Kamikamica in the long term since a faction of the Kubuna group on Bau had equated their overall marginalisation in the Fijian political discourse as a result of the rise of powerful Tovata chiefs like Mara. The role of education and personal achievement in the modern world, which contributed to the success of both Mara and Kamikamica, became a source of suspicion and animosity. In this context, the FA and

Kamikamica were up against powerful members of their vanua and matanitu who were backed by the government and the state, resulting in Kamikamica's defeat in the 1994 general election. Kamikamica was defeated by Talakuli, who stood for the SVT. However, the FAP filed a writ in court to declare that Adi Samanunu was a dual citizen of Fiji and the United Kingdom and under the 1990 Constitution, Fiji did not recognize dual citizenship. Talakuli's election into parliament was illegal.

This political development highlighted the irony behind the promulgation of the 1990 Constitution as a means of protecting and advancing the paramountcy of Fijian rights. The first victim of its immigration law was a high chief from Bau and Kubuna, Adi Samanunu. The vacancy left by Talakuli led to three successive and hotly contested by-elections in the province of Tailevu by the SVT and FAP. Josevata Kamikamica, leader of the FAP, unsuccessfully contested the first two general elections. After the third by-election, the FAP still could not secure the Tailevu Provincial communal seat in parliament. The table below shows the results of the Tailevu by-elections between 1995 and 1996.

Table 29: 1995 By-election: Tailevu Fijian Provincial Constituency

Constituency: Tailevu Fijian Provincial	Candidate/Political Party	Votes Polled by each Candidate	Votes Polled by Winning Candidate	Total Votes Counted	No. of voters on roll/% who polled
July 1995					
	Ratu Manasa Seniloli (SVT)	3,678	3,678	8,183	13,464 (62.07%)
	Josevata Kamikamica (FAP)	2,798			
	Iliesa Duvuloco (FNP)	1,707			
December, 1995					
	Ratu Manasa Seniloli (SVT)	4,146	4,146	7,985	13,993 (58%)
	Josevata Kamikamica (FAP)	3,447			
	Iliesa Duvuloco (FNP)	392			
May, 1996					
	Lagisoa Delana (SVT)	3,565	3,565	7,297	13,993 (52.83%)
	Ratu Apenisa Cakobau (FAP)	2,775			
	Iliesa Duvuloco (FNP)	957			

(Source: *Electoral Commission Report* for Jan.1, 1994 – Dec. 31, 1996: appendix 16,17,18)

All three by-elections in the Tailevu Fijian Provincial Constituency, as can be seen from the table above, were won by the SVT Party albeit with small majorities. A significant development which these elections demonstrated was the split within the traditional polity of Bau, the center of the Matanitu Kubuna, between supporters of the SVT and those of the FAP respectively. The two

political parties articulated ancient rivalries within and between traditional matanitu in eastern and northeastern Fiji.

Amongst Fijians, state-directed political development since 1987 marginalised the role of Tailevu and the Matanitu of Kubuna in Fijian politics. Being the core of the Kubuna Confederacy, within which are located the two most powerful chiefdoms since the 18th century, Verata and Bau, Tailevu was a symbol of strength. During the period of colonization, it was mostly vanua chiefs from Bau and Tailevu who were employed by the British in the Matanitu iTaukei. This strengthened their traditional role as well as their political power. However, the dominance of Madraiwiwi, and later his son Sukuna in the Matanitu iTaukei and later Sukuna's nephew Mara, as a civil servant and Fiji's first and longest reigning Prime Minister, shifted the balance of power to the Matanitu Tovata. Mara's return after Rabuka's 1987 coup was enough to confirm Kubuna's suspicion.

The SVT and FAP supporters in the province of Tailevu were in a dilemma in terms of which party commanded the interest of Tailevu and Kubuna as a whole. A number of vanua chiefs and political elites in the province sympathized with the marginalized role of Kubuna after the events of 1987. They regarded Kamikamica as the best contender for the job given his social and professional background. It was predicted that the party would not only promote overall socio-political and economic development in Fiji but equally important, restore the former glory of the Kubuna Confederacy.¹⁶ It consequently led to the support given to the FAP by some vanua chiefs in Tailevu and Naitasiri as a homegrown political party.

In hindsight, the narrative of the dilemma, leading to the formation of the FAP also highlighted sub-narratives of "strategic negotiation" and "opportunistic calculations" amongst the chiefly elites on Bau, against a backdrop of modern realities. While Kamikamica was a fellow kinsman, Rabuka on the other hand, controlled national power. In the long term for voters this meant access to

¹⁶ Interview with Inosi Tawakedrau, 10 October, 2002. Nausori, Fiji.

resources and power, hence, the desire to support Rabuka. Another reason for supporting the SVT was the hope that Bau would regain its lost position in the eastern and northeastern socio-political pecking order. However, in modern Fiji, traditional social statuses and rank increasingly require merit for long term security. Spate argued that:

The functions of a chief as a real leader lost much of their point with the suppression of warfare...but constant emphasis seems to have led to an abstract loyalty in vacuo, to leaders who have nowhere to lead in the old terms and, having become a sheltered aristocracy, too often lack the skills or the inclination to lead on the new ways.¹⁷

The narrative which underpinned the formation of the FAP and dilemmas which emerged from it, in the long term threw up issues regarding traditional rivalries, leadership competitions, and the desire to defend an old order in post-colonial Fiji. The formation of the FAP can be viewed as indicating the ongoing fragmentation of the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy as well as the attempt to reconstruct the fragmented orthodoxy. Political dilemmas which emerged following the 1987 coups were exacerbated by the 1990 Constitution.

The 1995 Constitution Review

Decree No.22 justified the abrogation of the 1970 Constitution. It stated:

Widespread belief that the 1970 Constitution was inadequate to give protection to the interests of the indigenous Fijian people, their values, traditions, customs, ways of life and economic well being.¹⁸

This fear existed prior to the attainment of political independence and the demands by mostly Fijian political activists and groups such as the Fijian Chamber of Commerce for greater involvement of ordinary indigenous Fijians in Fiji's politico-economic development. Their demands included the implementation of laws which recognized the paramountcy of Fijian interests as well as the implementation of regulations to review the ownership of maritime and land resources.¹⁹ The equalization in the number of seats for the House of Representatives between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians in the 1970 Constitution was also a point of contention. According to Viliame Savu, he was

¹⁷ Spate, O. H. K. 1959. *The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects*. Council Paper No. 13 of 1959. Legislative Council of Fiji. Government Press, Suva: 5-6.

¹⁸ See *The Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji*, July 25, 1990: 498.

¹⁹ Interview with Viliame Savu, 4 October, 2002, Suva, Fiji. See also Constitution of the Fijian Nationalist Vanua Tako/Lavo Party, Elections Office, Suva, Fiji.

a member of a Fijian pressure group which personally informed Fijian chiefly representatives to the pre-independence 1965 constitutional conference in London about the importance of giving Fijians more seats in parliament. However, they were ignored by Ratu Mara and his group. The resulting defeat of the Alliance Party in 1987 exposed the weak position of Fijians to control political power under the 1970 Constitution.

On the whole the 1987 coups and the promulgation of the 1990 constitution was viewed by Fijian nationalists, as well as those who supported the coups, as the right path towards the re-assertion of the paramountcy of Fijian interests. However, this did not imply that the 1990 constitution was supported by all indigenous Fijians. As explained consistently in this study, Fijians were not and are not an homogenous group with a single socio-political hierarchy. In this sense, rivalries exist amongst different kinship groups and usually the values and interests of the most dominant groups are promoted through different means. In this regard, the 1990 constitution was an avenue for the promotion of such values and interests. Constitutions are not "value-neutral"; they are written from specific ideological discourses which promote and protect the interests of certain groups. Inevitably, the 1990 Constitution generated its own internal contradictions. This led to both internal and external conflicts which emanated from its promulgation. The constitution was biased towards indigenous Fijians or perhaps, as ousted Prime Minister Bavadra stated, it was promulgated to protect the interests of a few Fijian political elites who lost political power through the 1987 general election.²⁰

A number of countries had also expressed concern about Fiji's 1990 constitution. However, this was often defended by members of the Fijian political elites who assumed political power after the 1987 coups. In an address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York in October, 1990, Fiji's Interim Minister for Trade and Commerce, Berenado Vunibobo, attacked Fiji's overseas constitutional critics. Vunibobo argued that Fiji's 1990 Constitution should be viewed in the context of recent global socio-political upheavals which

²⁰ See Comments on the Draft Constitution, A Paper Delivered by Dr. Timoci Bavadra on Friday, 20th January, 1989 to the Supporters of the Western Confederacy: 3. Typed manuscript in the personal collection of the researcher. See also "Suva Court Hears of Retaliation Against Constitution Burning" in *The Fiji Times*, November 8, 1990": 2.

were a result of a "reawakening of indigenous consciousness and aspirations". Additionally, Vunibobo reminded the audience that a review period of seven years was included in the Constitution.²¹

There were a number of factors which contributed to the review of the 1990 Constitution, foremost of which was the constitutional provision for the review of the constitution after seven years.²² This provision facilitated the review that by 1993 the SVT government was already initiating a review process. Additionally, the downturn in the economy caused by various controversial decrees which were promulgated in the post-1987 coup period also facilitated the review of the 1990 constitution as the new constitution exacerbated earlier feelings of insecurity amongst Fiji's multiracial population. The Sunday observance decree, for example, was passed specifically to appease the Methodist Church supporters of the coups. The decree had initially banned all types of commercial activities on Sunday, a move which was aimed at imposing orthodox Christian principles on all Fiji citizens irrespective of their religious beliefs. This decree affected all Fiji citizens in one way or another. In May of 1989 a new Sunday observance decree was promulgated to repeal almost all restrictions in the former decree. Activities which were again allowed on Sunday included agricultural activities such as cane harvesting, sugar milling activities, all types of emergency services, service industries such as catering, public service industries such as transport, security services including private security services, radio broadcasts, legal representation on arrest, telecommunication and telegraph services, water services, mine pumping, ventilation and winding, all types of medical and pharmaceutical services.²³

The Sunday observance decree directly affected Fiji's main industries such as sugar, tourism, gold, and transport. Apart from the inconvenience it had caused Fiji's economy and people, a large proportion of the workers in these industries, such as the gold mining and tourism industries, were indigenous Fijians. A ban on Sunday work implied lesser disposable income for workers' families and

²¹ See *The Fiji Times*, October 12, 1990. "Fiji Hits Back at its Critics": 1. See also section 161, "Review of the Constitution" in *Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji*, July 25, 1990: 148.

²² See section 161 "Review of the Constitution" in the *Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji*, July 25, 1990: 148.

²³ See "Decree Allows Sunday Harvest" in *The Fiji Times*, December 8, 1990: 3.

hence lesser income to support the kinship network. This caused instant negative reaction to the Sunday observance decree and to the coups which led to the decrees, and ultimately undermined any future support for the imposition of a state religion on society as a whole. Support for Christianity as a state religion from within Fijian society was weakened in this sense. The review of the 1990 Constitution was inevitable as a result of ongoing socio-political and economic problems caused by earlier decrees.²⁴

The review was also politicized through a deal which Rabuka struck with the Fiji Labour Party, the party which he ousted in 1987. The FLP helped Rabuka to become Prime Minister after the SVT won the election in 1992. In an interview with the Fiji Times after he was sworn in as Prime Minister, Rabuka stated that:

In line with the agreement with the Fiji Labour Party, I will be initiating bipartisan discussions on a review of the 1990 Constitution.²⁵

The Fiji Labour Party had given Rabuka the numbers which he needed to enable his majority support in parliament. This support was sealed by a written agreement by Rabuka for the fulfillment of the FLP's four requests in return for their support. These included an immediate review of the 1990 Constitution; a revocation of the Labour reform decree; an immediate scrapping of the Value Added Tax (VAT); and the formation of a forum to discuss the future of agricultural leases under ALTA.²⁶ However, this deal became a constant cause of conflict between Rabuka and the FLP when Rabuka continuously ignored the deal after he secured the prime ministership.²⁷ It therefore became inevitable for Rabuka's SVT government to institute an immediate review of the 1990 Constitution.

By 1992 the General Secretary of the Methodist Church of Fiji, Reverend Manasa Lasaro, was still advocating tougher laws regarding Sunday observation. This was to involve a ban on trade and sports as well.²⁸ However,

²⁴ See also Reeves, Sir Paul, Vakatora, T. R. and Lal, B. V. 1996. *Towards a United Future: Report of the Constitution Review Commission*. Parliamentary Paper No. 34 of 1996. Parliament of Fiji.

²⁵ See "Coalition Government is on the Way", in *The Fiji Times*, June 3, 1992: 1.

²⁶ See "The Deal With Labour", in *The Fiji Times*, June 3, 1992: 3.

²⁷ See "Rabuka, Labour Battle" in *The Fiji Times*, June 16, 1992: 1 and See also "Ratu Mara Interview" in Letter to the Editor, *The Fiji Times*, June 18, 1992: 6.

²⁸ See "Methodists Push for Tougher Sunday Ban" in *The Fiji Times*, June 13, 1992: 1.

both the 1990 and the 1997 constitutions promote the fundamental rights and freedom of the individual, including the right to choose and practice any religion.²⁹

Contradictions in the 1990 constitution also contributed to its review. The constitution in the first place did not reflect the multiracial nature of Fiji's society. Additionally, it contained special provisions for Fijians only and for special groups of Fijians who were involved in Rabuka's coups. Since it was formulated as a result of the 1987 coups, it lacked the consensus of all Fiji's citizens in its making. Basically, it created a sense of insecurity amongst the many non-Fijian citizens leading to high rates of emigration after 1987. The overall sense of insecurity directly impacted on Fiji's economy as investment both from within Fiji and from overseas was not forthcoming.

Like the 1990 Constitution, Fiji's 1997 Constitution has ample provisions for the protection of indigenous Fijian and Rotuman rights as well as recognizing institutions which protect these rights.³⁰ Additionally, there is also provision for affirmative action and social justice programmes which are aimed at securing opportunities for marginalized groups.³¹ Both the 1990 and 1997 constitutions allow for the nomination of the President by the Bose Levu Vakaturaga.³² While some indigenous Fijians wanted the post of the Prime Minister to be reserved for indigenous Fijians only, others believed that it should be open to all Fiji citizens. Ratu Mara, in presenting the members of the review team to the Lauan Provincial Council meeting, stated that Fiji needed the best and most capable person as its Prime Minister, regardless of race. A top priority was the leadership quality of the person.³³

²⁹ See Chapter 2 (Sections 4 – 15), *Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji*, July 25, 1990: 1-23 and Chapter 4 (Bill of Rights, Subsection 35(1)-(4)), *Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands*, July 25, 1998: 25-26.

³⁰ See Chapter 2 (6) – Compact. *Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands*, 27th July, 1998.: 11-12.

³¹ See also Chapter 2 (Compact, Subsection 6 (b)-(e), (k)), *Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands*, July 25, 1998:11-12.

The review of the 1990 Constitution began in 1995 and the review team consisted of Sir Paul Reeves, former Governor General of New Zealand, Professor Brij Lal of the Australian National University and Tomasi Vakatora of Fiji.

³² See *Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji*, 25th July 1990. Chapter V (31): 36. See also *Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands*, 27th July, 1998. Chapter 7 (90): 58.

³³ See Rika, N. "Let the Best Man Be PM: Ratu Mara", in *The Fiji Times*, September 20, 1995: 1.

The 1997 Constitution was promulgated after wide consultation with all Fiji's communities. Notable changes had to do with certain provisions such as the change in the electoral system from "first past the post" to the "alternative vote". This was accompanied by the change in constituency boundaries comprising of seventy-one single member constituencies. **(See map on Fijian provincial constituencies in the 1997 Constitution)**. In the Fijian communal constituencies, the large provinces of Cakaudrove, Ba and Tailevu, become two constituencies each instead of one with three members each as provided for in the 1990 Constitution.³⁴ Fijians still retain the majority of communally elected members in parliament, however, with a reduction in the number of seats.

The 1997 Constitution introduced a seventy-one member House of Representatives who are elected by:

A roll of voters who are registered as Fijians [23 members]; a roll of voters who are registered as Indians [19 members]; a roll of voters who are registered as Rotumans [1 member]; a roll of voters who are registered otherwise than as Fijians, Indians or Rotumans [3 members].³⁵

Whereas in the 1990 Constitution all thirty-seven Fijian members were elected communally, i.e., thirty-two through the Fijian Provincial Communal Constituencies and five through the Fijian Urban Communal Constituencies, in the 1997 Constitution twenty-three members are elected communally; seventeen members are elected through the Fijian Provincial Communal Constituencies and six under the Fijian Urban Communal Constituencies.³⁶ Nineteen Indo-Fijian members and three General Elector members are also elected communally. However, a new addition was the introduction of twenty-five Open seats on an open electoral roll.³⁷ This allows for any citizen to

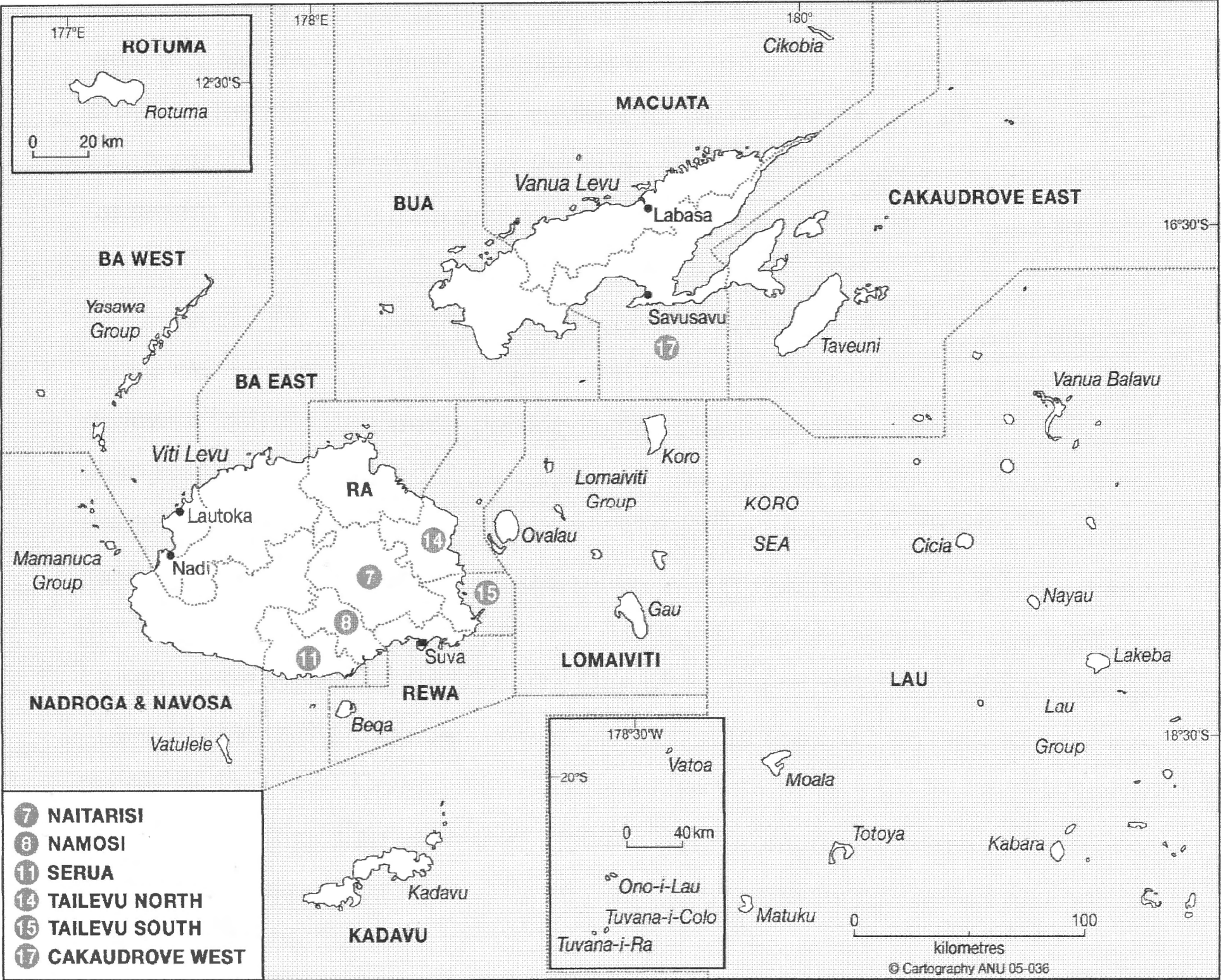
³⁴ Amongst Tailevu North Fijians, this has been a welcomed contribution of the 1997 constitution. It has enabled them to elect their own government representative.

³⁵ *Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands*, 27th July, 1998: 36-37.

³⁶ See also. Chapter VI (Parliament), *Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji*, July 25, 1990: 41-56 and Chapter 6 (The Parliament, Subsection 50-52), *Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands*, July 27, 1998: 36-38.

³⁷ See Chapter 6, 51 (1-5). *Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji*, July 27, 1998: 36-37.

Fijian Provincial Constituencies Under the 1997 Constitution



See Appendix C for the 1997 Constituency Boundaries

compete openly regardless of ethnicity and in the long term, aims at promoting multi-ethnic tolerance and nation-building amongst Fiji's diverse communities.³⁸

Within Fijian society, changes in the electoral provisions in terms of the reduction in the number of rural-based communally elected members, the increase in the number of urban seats as well as the inclusion of Open seats, was a welcomed political development. In the long term it facilitates and provides the opportunity for all citizens for vie for political leadership. Within Fijian society the introduction of the open seat provision provide opportunities for groups which were marginalized in the 1970 and 1990 electoral provision.

Indigenous Fijians had different views on the review of the 1990 Constitution. There were groups which supported and those which opposed the review. The review affected Fijian party politics in the sense that the process introduced changes which influenced the formation of new political parties. Various political groups either formed new political parties or broke away from existing parties to form new ones. One such political party, which was formed by a breakaway group of the SVT Party, was the Methodist Church-based, Veitokani ni Lewenivanua Vakarisito (VLV) Party. One of the major reasons for the formation of the VLV was the members' dissatisfaction with the SVT government for the review of the 1990 Constitution. The members, mostly from the provinces in Vanua Levu and Lau, felt that Rabuka had compromised his 1987 coup promises to indigenous Fijians.³⁹ The Cakaudrove provincial council was one of the eight out of fourteen provincial councils in Fiji which rejected the 1997 constitution. A direct impact of this was the formation of the VLV in Vanua Levu and Lau to counter the SVT Party.⁴⁰

Political Unity Through Christian Methodism: The “Veitokani ni Lewenivanua Vakarisito” (VLV)

The VLV party was established as another political party that emerged out of the same strain of political thinking that aimed at re-introducing political unity

³⁸ The National seats under the 1970 Constitution allowed for cross-voting which was an extension of communal voting since these national seats were defined by ethnicity. Open seats on the other hand allows for any citizen to compete openly regardless of ethnicity.

³⁹ Interview with Ratu Inoke Tabualevu, (Chiefly Herald of the Tui Cakau), October 29, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

⁴⁰ Interview with Ratu Inoke Tabualevu, October 29, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

amongst indigenous Fijians. It utilized the ideology of Fijian unity through the Christian philosophy of unity through one God. The proponents of the VLV Party thought that perhaps, unity through Christianity was to be a lasting form of unity amongst indigenous Fijians since they considered that the only common thing that has united all Fijians throughout Fiji was their worship of one God through Christianity.⁴¹ There was a realization by eastern and northeastern Fijians that the orthodoxy, which held the chiefly hegemony together, was rapidly fragmenting. Kamikamica and members of the traditional Matanitu of Kubuna had already formed the Fijian Association as an alternative to SVT but this was not widely accepted as it focused on Tailevu and Naitasiri, representing a part of Kubuna. Some members of the Methodist Church from various provinces in Vanua Levu and Lau predicted that the only hope left for the resurrection of the eastern and northeastern unity was through the formation of a political party by the Methodist Church. The provinces of Lau, Bua and Cakaudrove were the political power base of the VLV. The formation of this party was to re-strengthen the initial arrival of Christianity into Fiji through the Matanitu of Tovata, and the role that Tovata played in forging Fijian unity through Christianity.⁴²

The main objectives of the VLV party were the protection of the vanua and the Bose Levu Vakaturaga through Christian principles; the protection of indigenous Fijians and Rotumans as well as other minority ethnic groups, their cultures and what they valued; the protection of Indo-Fijians, their culture, values and their religion; the development of resources as a means of building wealth for the economy and people; the nurturing of youths so that they could be involved in decision-making processes; the encouragement of women's participation in development processes; the protection of the family unit as the most important basic unit of society; the protection of the environment and resources within it; and the adoption of the Christian principles in all law-making and decision-making processes.⁴³

Within the Methodist Church, Church Ministers who became directly involved in the formation of the VLV included former Church presidents, Manasa Lasaro

⁴¹ Interview with Ratu Inoke Tabualevu, October 29, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

⁴² Interview with Ratu Inoke Tabualevu, 29 October, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

⁴³ See Constitution for the Veitokani ni Lewenivanua Vakarisito, Elections Office, Suva, Fiji.

from the province of Bua in Vanua Levu, and Laisiasa Ratabacaca from the province of Lau. Tuiwainikai, the VLV spokesperson from Vanua Levu, during the formation of the party stated that:

They based their support on the fact that the ruling Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei government had done very little to benefit the grass root people in the north. We are supporting the idea behind setting up another political party because those already in government appear not to be doing their homework. First of all they only pay us lip service and then the next thing we know we are paying more from our pockets because of this devaluation thing... Unless the SVT lived up to its promises it [should] expect a surprise during the next general elections in the northern division.⁴⁴

The formation of the VLV through the Methodist Church was an attempt to strengthen the traditional role of the Methodist Church in consolidating the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy. The attempt by the church to be directly involved in party politics exposed it to ongoing dilemma within Fijian society. Part of this dilemma surfaced in 1987 during the first coup. Reverend Josateki Koroi, then President of the Fiji Methodist Church was removed from office by Reverend Manasa Lasaro, Reverend Ratu Ilaitia Caucau⁴⁵ and others in a "church coup".⁴⁶ Koroi had publicly condemned the 1987 coups. After the church coup, Caucau and Lasaro became President and General Secretary of the Methodist Church respectively. They gained favour with the interim military government of Ratu Mara for having the Methodist Church publicly support the 1987 coup and were used to project a Christian justification of the regime. For example, in May of 1991, the two Methodist church ministers were part of a powerful government delegation to negotiate the plight of the mine workers union at the Australian-owned Emperor Gold mine at Vatukoula.⁴⁷ Reverend

Lasaro's active role in supporting the 1987 coup was also rewarded when he, along with Rabuka, were offered Cabinet positions in 1991 by interim Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. However, Lasaro declined the position after consulting the twenty-six divisions of the Methodist church and his friends. He

⁴⁴ See *The Fiji Times*, March 18, 1998. "Methodists Back Political Party".

⁴⁵ Reverend Ratu Ilaitia Caucau is a high chief in the province of Lomaiviti in eastern Fiji, part of the Matanitu of Kubuna.

⁴⁶ See also "The Church Coup", in the *Islands Business* Vol. 15 (2), February 1989. 20-21.

⁴⁷ See *The Daily Post*, May 18, 1991, "Mine Bosses will not Budge": 1.

explained that his calling as a church minister was his first and foremost priority.⁴⁸

The direct involvement of a faction of the Methodist Church in party politics was an integral part of the overall dilemma of the interweaving of the role of the church and the state within indigenous Fijian society. As already explained in earlier chapters, the establishment of the Methodist Church in Fiji was enabled through a symbiotic relationship which developed between the Church and the eastern and northeastern chiefly establishment. Both institutions have used each other for their own legitimacy and survival. The Methodist Church, since its arrival in 1835 became very active in spearheading and legitimising the eastern and northeastern Fijian orthodoxy with the chieftdom of Bau and the Matanitu of Kubuna at the apex of the traditional socio-political hierarchy.⁴⁹

Within the Methodist Church, two schools of thought emerged following the 1987 coups to explain the role of the church in such a crisis. One was projected by Reverends Josateki Koroi, Rev. Dr. Ilaitia Tuwere and Rev. Dr. Jovili Meo. They argued for the separation of the roles of the church and state. This line of thinking was similar to that of Reverend Dr Martin Luther King who believed that the Church is neither master nor servant to the state but its conscience.⁵⁰ However, this line of thought was submerged by the orthodox line of thought adopted by Lasaro and Caucau and their group, who did not see the need for any demarcation between the state and the Church. Their actions exemplified their belief that the Methodist Church existed to promote and legitimize the maintenance of the eastern and northeastern Fijian orthodoxy: a reconceptualisation of the structure of traditional eastern and northeastern socio-political structure in which the offices of the sacred chief (Bete) and secular chief (Vunivalu), coexisted. However, Reverend Dr. Stephen Plant, a British Methodist Theologian Visiting Lecturer at the Davuilevu Theological College argued that:

⁴⁸ See *The Daily Post*, May 25, 1991, "Lasaro Rejects Government Job": 1.

⁴⁹ See also Baleiwaqa, T. 2003. "Rerevaka na Kalou ka Doka na Tui". PhD Thesis. The Australian National University, Canberra.

⁵⁰ See also Rev. Dr. Steven Plant, "Church and the State – Just Where do you Draw the Line", in *The Sunday Sun*, March 4, 2001: 6.

Christian theology, like Law or like Science, must follow certain rules and patterns to make sense. Christians can't just think what they like. They have to base what they think on four kinds of Christian authority: the Bible, Church tradition, experience and reason. However well intentioned a Christian might be, without basing his decisions on these given authorities he is in danger of falling into the trap of using religion to justify personal political preferences, or worse still of using the church as a means to political power.⁵¹

The formation of the VLV could be traced through the second school of thought upon which Lasaro based his support for the 1987 coups. Lasaro's direct involvement in the formation of the VLV party, can be viewed, in a way, as an attempt to use the church as a means to political power.⁵²

The formation of the VLV party with its power base in Vanua Levu and parts of Lau extended the influence of regional party politics outside Viti Levu. Since the establishment of party politics in the 1960s, northern and eastern maritime provinces have always been areas of political conservatism, closely aligned with the Fijian Association. A few high chiefs like the late Ratu Soso Katonivere, Tui Macuata, the late Ratu Glanville Lalabalavu, Tui Cakau, and Koresi Matatolu, a Bua Fijian, were dissenting Fijians from these areas who joined the Indo-Fijian-dominated National Federation Party.⁵³ They saw an opportunity to access power through the NFP. Additionally, Viliame Savu of Nayau in Lau formed the Fiji Independent Party and later joined Butadroka's Fijian Nationalist Party. Generally, Fijians in the eastern and northeastern vanua provided the power base of both the Alliance and later the SVT. Dissenting political figures like

Savu formed and joined alternative political parties on Viti Levu where they live.⁵⁴ Savu's political influence in Lau was marginal given the traditional Polynesian hierarchy of Lauan society. Like the Kingdom of Tonga, Mara's

⁵¹ See Reverend. Dr. Stephen Plant, "Church and the State – Just Where Do You Draw the Line" in *The Sunday Sun*, March 4, 2001. Sun (Fiji) News Ltd., Suva, Fiji: 6.

⁵² See also Rev. Dr. Ilaitia Tuwere's View in "Methodists Back Political Party", *The Fiji Times*, March 18, 1998. Fiji Times Ltd., Suva, Fiji.

⁵³ Koresi Matatolu later joined the SVT.

⁵⁴ Of the three northern provinces, Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata, Macuata is more Melanesian in its socio-political structure in the sense that it has a matrilineal system. In this regard, the people of Macuata, like those in western Viti Levu, have always shown independence in political thinking. They have not really fitted in well with the overall idea of being part of the "Ma'afu created Tovata Confederacy" which assumes a hierarchy in which Cakaudrove dominates. Interview with Dr. Tupeni Baba, Suva, Fiji.

leadership in Lau was all-encompassing. Until the formation of the VLV, no other political party won in Lau under Mara's reign. Savu explained that once he was prevented from campaigning on his island of Nayau by Ratu Mara.⁵⁵

In tracing the origins of the VLV Party it can be argued that its formation indeed contributed to the fragmentation of the eastern and northeastern Fijian orthodoxy. The latent effect of the 1987 coups stretched beyond the boundary of Fijian unity for which it was intended. It juxtaposed the dialectics of unity and disunity within Fijian society as each socio-political group defined its interest in terms of the state-imposed unity. Against this backdrop, alternative party formation continued.

Re-affirming the Western Fijian Orthodoxy Through the "Party of National Unity" (PANU)

Following further fragmentation of the SVT after the review of the 1990 Constitution, the Ba Provincial Council initiated the formation of its own political party. The move was strongly supported by Tora. The idea of another western Fijian-based political party was also extended to other provinces in western Viti Levu. This included Nadroga/Navosa and Ra. In the province of Ba, the thinking behind the formation of PANU was supported by all vanua chiefs. Like the formation of the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party as well as the formation of SVT, the idea behind the formation of PANU was mooted at the provincial council level and disseminated to the people later.⁵⁶

The late Tui Vitogo, Ratu Jovesa Sovasova, emphasized that the formation of PANU and its coalition with Fiji Labour Party was a positive move within the province of Ba. It was an attempt at promoting economic development especially amongst the indigenous members in the province of Ba as well as forging better multi-ethnic tolerance amongst all people in the province. Ratu Sovasova emphasized that amongst farmers in the province of Ba, race is not an important issue because farmers help each other a lot across the ethnic

⁵⁵ Interview with Viliame Savu, October 4, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

⁵⁶ Interview with Adi Ilisapeci Bole, 11 September, 2002. Suva, Fiji and interview with the late Tui Vitogo, Ratu Jovesa Sovasova, November 9, 2002. Vitogo Village, Ba Province.

divide. A coalition with the FLP was regarded in a positive light.⁵⁷ This was reflected in the objectives and constitution of the party which included the promotion of the socio-political and economic welfare of all Fiji citizens; the promotion of the special interests of indigenous Fijians; and the advancement of their socio-political and economic development in association with those of other ethnic communities in Fiji. The constitution of PANU also emphasized the promotion of multi-ethnic tolerance, understanding and harmonious living which was considered the only lasting foundation upon which to build one nation. The constitution also emphasized the observation of order as a means to progress and the maintenance and strengthening of links with the United Nations and other international forums. Additionally, safeguarding the interests of all communities in Fiji was also emphasized in the PANU Constitution.⁵⁸

Reaction to the formation of PANU was swift from those whose overall political dominance in Fiji were already under threat. In 1999 the SVT Secretary General, Koresi Matatolu, a former National Federation Party member, labeled newly formed political parties such as PANU as “vodo loto” or “free riders,” since, he argued, the constitutions of these newly formed parties were encroaching on those of the SVT.⁵⁹ The SVT, which was formed out of the 1987 coups in the name of protecting indigenous rights, was now claiming to be multi-racial. Matatolu however forgot, deliberately or otherwise, that Butadroka had said exactly the same thing against the SVT when the SVT encroached on the FNP’s nationalist agenda in 1991. Perhaps, it was the guilt of encroachment which prevented Rabuka from inviting the Fijian Nationalist Party to join his coalition government after the 1992 general election.⁶⁰ While the radical stand of the Fijian Nationalist Party was an obvious reason for this, another logical explanation was that the two parties were propagating the same ideology in different ways and competing for the same Fijian political power base.

By 1999 the SVT was attempting to portray itself as a multi-ethnic party like its predecessor the Alliance Party. While the Alliance Party could have done this

⁵⁷ Interview with the Tui Vitogo, Ratu Jovesa Sovasova, 9 November, 2002. Vitogo village, Ba Province, Fiji.

⁵⁸ See the Constitution of the Party for National Unity (PANU). Elections Office, Suva, Fiji.

⁵⁹ See “SVT Hits Out at New Party” in *The Fiji Times*, April 12, 1999: 3.

⁶⁰ See “Coalition Government is on the Way: PM”, in *The Fiji Times*, June 3, 1992: 1.

easily, since it had an Indian Alliance and a General electors arm, the SVT on the other hand, emerged out of a political background of violence and authoritarianism. In this context, its claim to a broad and multi-ethnic agenda sounded hollow even amongst indigenous Fijians. This led to the formation of new political parties. Evidently, the formation of PANU was a threat to the eastern and northeastern elites whose interests was championed by the SVT.

PANU's formation was a further articulation of the traditional independence of the western Viti Levu Fijians. Dominant political figures in the province of Ba such as Apisai Tora used the opportunity to not only propel western Fijian socio-political and economic interests but to strike deals with the eastern Fijian political elites. Western Fijians have realized the importance of their region in terms of Fiji's economic development. Over the years, through the formation of alternative political parties, or by joining Indo-Fijian dominated parties, they have used these advantages to check the power of the eastern and northeastern political elites. Tora, in explaining the redistribution of resources and development in Fiji, argued that western Fiji received "bits" from those in power, which did not reflect western Fiji's resource contribution.⁶¹

The political shrewdness of western Fijian politicians like Tora in terms of their political maneuvering leading to coalitions with other political parties serve as "balance of power" strategies within the realm of Fijian politics. Tora explained that the coalition with the Fiji Labour Party and the Fijian Association Party was done on amicable terms. He was negotiating with the leader of the FLP, Mahendra Chaudhry on behalf of the vanua chiefs in Ba. Negotiations centered around the sharing of the seven National seats within the province.⁶² PANU had asked for the support of FLP in acquiring three of the seven Open seats for the indigenous Fijians in Ba to add to the two Fijian communal seats. This would have given Fijians in Ba more political power to negotiate for the renewal of ALTA leases within the province. Most of the native land on agriculture leases (ALTA) is in the province of Ba. The chiefs of Ba were happy about this agreement. However, shortly before the 1999 general election, Chaudhry

⁶¹ Interview with Apisai Tora, June 5, 2002. Natalau village, Sabeto, Ba Province.

⁶² Out of the 71 seats in Fiji's Parliament, 25% or 18 seats are in the province of Ba. The Indo-Fijians have 8 communal seats; there are 7 Open or National seats and 2 Fijian Communal seats.

withdrew from the agreement with the Ba chiefs. This angered the chiefs and also weakened the coalition prior to the commencement of the 1999 general election.⁶³ Nevertheless, PANU went ahead and became part of a People's Coalition government after the 1999 general election. They governed for exactly a year when George Speight executed his civilian coup on May 19, 2000. However, the continuing trend in the formation of western Viti Levu-based political parties over the years, has strengthened the claim of western Fijians to political recognition and power sharing in Fiji's politics.

The Nationalist Vanua Tako/Lavo Party (NVTLP)

By 1999, Butadroka's original Fijian Nationalist Party had undergone a series of name changes. These changes were due to a number of reasons. First and foremost was the attempt to re-construct the party's image in order to entice more members. Prior to the general election of 1992, the party was registered as the Christian Fijian Nationalist Party (CFNP). The use of the prefix "Christian" was aimed at portraying the party as being Christian so that it could attract and share Christian voters with other Fijian parties like the SVT. The constitution of the Fijian Nationalist Party stated as one of its philosophies the maintenance of Fiji as a Christian state at all times.⁶⁴

In 1999 the Party had a coalition with the Tako/Lavo Party and became known as the Nationalist Vanua Tako/Lavo Party (NVTLP).⁶⁵ Again, the use of the Fijian concept of Tako/Lavo was aimed at promoting culture. The constitution of the party states:

Tako/Lavo – the ancient system of kinship and group solidarity amongst early Fijians in which Tako (father) and Lavo (son) identify their relationships. All people who are Tako are in a brotherly and sisterly relationship with one another; similarly all those who are lavo. Both groups relate to each other on the basis of respect. This is the principle our party wishes to promote between all groups of

⁶³ Interview with Apisai Tora, June 5, 2002, Natalau Village, Sabeto, Ba Province.

⁶⁴ See Constitution of the Nationalist Vanua Tako/Lavo Party, Elections Office, Suva Fiji.

⁶⁵ The Fijian concept "Tako-Lavo" is used by some kinship groups on the island of Viti Levu to define alternating generations. For example, a grandfather and his grandchildren belong to the same generation and may call each other "Tako" whereas, the second generation consisting of a father and his grandchildren may call each other "Lavo". This is used in the inland parts of the provinces of Ba, Naitasiri, Navosa and Wainibuka in Tailevu. The Tako-Lavo concept is a means of enhancing friendly competitions within the kinship network as well as strengthening kinship ties.

people in Fiji among indigenous Fijians themselves, and between indigenous Fijians and other ethnic groups.⁶⁶

The use of such traditional forms of relationship also aims at challenging the control of the notion of vanua by mainstream Fijian political parties like SVT. A major complaint of Butadroka since the coups of 1987 was what he termed the theft of his political ideology by mainstream eastern and northeastern Fijian elites. Since the coups of 1987 and the establishment of the SVT Party Butadroka argued that he was politically marginalized by the same group of Fijian elites who used to champion multi-racialism and dismissed his radical stand of openly declaring the need to protect the rights of indigenous Fijians. These principles are openly declared in the constitution of the party which includes the protection of the Fijian people under the sovereignty of God; the recognition of the Vanua as the link between the past, present and future; the need to make Fijian political parties the source of spiritual beliefs, social harmony and financial responsibility; to ensure that Fiji becomes a Christian state; to ensure that the sovereignty of the land and all its resources remain under Fijian control; to promote the protection of the environment and all its resources; to assist in the education of indigenous Fijians as well as the protection of their cultural values through their languages, art forms, modern and pre-history; and to assist and promote indigenous Fijians in modern business practices.⁶⁷ The Nationalist Vanua Tako/Lavo Party focuses on indigenous Fijian paramountcy, focusing on Fijian political and resource control by resource owners. This however, threatened maritime chiefs from the smaller islands in eastern and northeastern Fiji, whose islands do not have much land resources to begin with. The nationalists have been consistent in their demand since the establishment of the party in 1975.

Through the formation of the SVT, mainstream Fijian politicians have tried to champion the paramountcy of ethnic Fijians, traditionally the domain of the Fijian Nationalist Party. This was later emulated by newly emerging Fijian political parties mostly in eastern and northeastern Fiji. A direct result of the adoption and refinement of Butadroka's ethnic Fijian sentiment by other political

⁶⁶ Constitution of the Nationalist Vanua Tako/Lavo Party, Elections Office, Suva, Fiji: 7.

⁶⁷ See the Constitution of the Nationalist Vanua Tako/Lavo Party, Elections Office, Suva, Fiji: 4-5.

parties has been the overall marginalization of the Nationalist party. As mentioned earlier, the SVT was unwilling to invite the Fijian Nationalist Party to form a coalition government since 1992 even though the two parties shared common ideologies and visions in the promotion of indigenous Fijian rights. After his party's election victory in 1992, Rabuka stated that:

He could not form a coalition with the Fijian Nationalist United Front because the SVT parliamentary caucus would not allow it. He said he made it clear to the Nationalist leader... that it was a party caucus decision and he had to respect that.⁶⁸

Butadroka's lament about the theft of his political ideology may have been true after all. While a number of Fijian political parties, like the Fijian Nationalist and the SVT shared common ideologies, an observable trend is their tendency to remain separate entities. In this case, perhaps the SVT did not want a coalition with the Nationalists because it did not want to give the upper hand to the Nationalists, who for a long time had been championing a version of Fijian paramountcy. While the eastern and northeastern political elites through the Alliance and SVT also championed Fijian paramountcy, this was envisioned under a specific order and hierarchy which was incongruent with the view of Fijian paramountcy advocated by grassroot parties like the FNP. Butadroka, for example, could not understand why the eastern and northeastern high chiefs and elites in the Alliance Party could not help Fijians establish businesses if they claimed to represent the paramountcy of indigenous Fijian interests. Such conflicts showed that the notion of paramountcy of Fijian interests is imagined in different ways by different groups. In this context, Butadroka's direct way of confronting controversial issues like Fijian economic marginalisation in light of Fijian government dominance, exposed the hidden class interests of the eastern and northeastern political elites which was masked by the Fijian paramountcy rhetoric. This posed a direct threat to the eastern and northeastern political elites power monopoly, causing many to distance themselves from the party and its overall confrontational strategy. Viliame Savu warned that Fijians who usurped their nationalist ideology since the 1987 coups were not genuine about the overall development of indigenous Fijians but were out to promote and protect their own class and elite interests.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ See "Coalition Government is on the Way: PM" in *The Fiji Times*, June 3, 1992: 1.

Since 1977, the Fijian Nationalist Party has maintained its political support in Butadroka's province, Rewa. Butadroka won the general election in the Rewa Fijian Provincial Constituency in April 1977, 1982, and 1992. However, although the political party is the longest surviving Fijian party, it has remained on the periphery of Fijian politics. Members, however, have been active in times of political destabilization such as in the periods prior to the execution of the coups in 1987 and in 2000. The formation of new Fijian political parties since 1987, more so those which claimed to champion Fijian rights, has marginalized the once-dominant role of the Fijian Nationalist Party. Since 1987, party politics in Fiji has tended towards ethnic polarization. The Nationalist Party on the whole, since its formation in the 1970s, has had a permanent role of highlighting and radicalizing Fijian issues. Their version of Fijian paramountcy, as already discussed, challenged the version which was advocated by the Alliance Party and the SVT.

Since their defeat at the polls in April 1977 and ten years later in April 1987, the Fijian political elites who survived through the Alliance Party and later SVT, were threatened more by internal Fijian political dissidents than by Indo-Fijian political parties. Part of the threat was the continuous expression of independent political thinking through the continuous efforts to build multiracial alliances or by joining Indo-Fijian dominated parties like the National Federation Party. Dissenting Fijians in the period under study saw an opportunity to defy the eastern and northeastern hegemony through multiracial alliances. Meanwhile, Indo-Fijians have been members of only two major parties, NFP or FLP since party politics began in the 1960s. Fijians on the other hand, have formed a number of new political parties or joined non-Fijian dominated parties since the 1960s. Overall, the 1987 coups only served to exacerbate such trends and by the 1999 general election, diverse political thinking was reflected in the number of Fijian parties which contested the election.

The 1999 General Election

The electoral provisions used in the 1999 general election were derived from the 1997 constitution. Election regulations were altered for the adoption of the Alternative Vote (AV) system, the inclusion of new constituency boundaries and

⁶⁹ Interview with Viliame Savu, 4 October, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

the introduction of Open seats as mentioned earlier. The table below shows the results of the 1999 general election in the Fijian Provincial communal constituencies.

Table 30: 1999 General Election: Fijian Provincial Communal Constituencies Under the Alternative Vote System

Fijian Provincial Communal Constituencies	Candidates/Political Parties	Votes Polled by Winning Candidate	Total Votes Counted	No. of Voters on Roll/% Who Voted	% of Valid Votes Polled	No. of Votes Needed to Win (50%+1)
Bua	Mitieli Bulanauca (VLV)	3027	5530	6278 (95%)	88%	2,766
Kadavu	James M Ah Koy (SVT)	4,159	4,987	5,826 (92.2%)	85.6%	2,415
Lau	Koila M Nailatikau (VLV)	3,012	5,927	6,806 (93.2%)	87.1%	2,965
Lomaiviti	Simione Kaitani (Independent)	3,475	6,364	8,102 (69.7%)	78.5%	3,183
Macuata	Poseci Bune (FLP)	4,257	7,926	9,377 (91.6%)	84.5%	3,964
Nadroga/Navosa	Leone Tuisowaqa (Independent)	6,621	13,071			6,636
Ba East	Ponipate Lesavua (PANU)	4,413	8,398	10,019 (91.84%)	83.82%	4,200
Ba West	Meli Bogileka (PANU)	6,587	10,052	12,435 (89.07%)	80.84%	5,027
Tailevu North	Samisoni Tokainavo (SVT)	3,995	7,449	8,946 (95%)	83%	3,725
Tailevu South	Esira Rabuno (FAP)	3,810	7,110	8,737 (91%)	81%	3,556
Cakaudrove East	Inoke Kubuobola (SVT)	5,135	6,528	8,114 (85%)	78%	3,265
Cakaudrove West	Kini Maivalili (Independent)	5,460	7,920	9,061 (93%)	87%	3,961

(Source: *Fiji Islands Government Gazette*, Vol.13 (64), Sept. 1, 1999: 885-1012)

The dominance of the SVT party in Fijian party politics had weakened by 1999 as can be gauged by the results of the 1999 general election. Newly formed

political parties such as the Party of National Unity and the Fijian Association Party had displaced the SVT. Similarly, the election results for the Fijian Urban constituencies, as can be seen in the table below, once the monopoly of the SVT party, were won by newly formed parties in the 1999 general election.

Table 31: 1999 General Election: Fijian Urban Constituencies

Fijian Urban Constituencies	Candidate/Political Party	Votes Polled by Winning Candidate	Total Votes Counted	No. of Voters on Roll/% Who Voted	% of Valid Voted Polled	No. of Votes Needed to Win (50%+1)
North West	Akanisi Koroitamana (PANU)	8,297	12,342	15,308 (84.69%)	80.62%	6,172
South West	Isimeli Cokanasiga (FAP)	5,378	9,475	12,066 (84%)	78%	4,738
Suva City	Viliame Volavola (FAP)	5,311	9,191	11,654 (87%)	79%	4,596
North East	Isireli Leweniqila (SVT)	5,418	10,182	13,214 (82%)	77%	5,092
Tamavua/Laucala Nasinu	Ema Tagicakibau (FAP)	5,489	10,014	12,565 (86%)	80%	5,008
	Joji Uluinakauvadra (FAP)	4,587	9,096	11,537 (85%)	79%	4,548

(Source: *Fiji Islands Government Gazette*, Vol.13 (64), Sep.1, 1999: 885-1012)

The SVT Party managed to win only one out of six urban Fijian seats in the 1999 general election. The table below shows a percentage breakdown of Fijian votes amongst the different Fijian political parties in the Fijian Provincial Communal and the Fijian Urban Constituencies.

Table 32: 1999 General Election: Fijian Parties: Percentage of Votes in Fijian Provincial Communal and Urban Constituencies

Fijian Provincial Constituencies	Valid Votes	SVT %	FAP %	NVTLP %	VLV %	PANU %	FLP %	COIN %	IND %
Bua	5,330	20.09	-	4.38	54.37	-	-	20.77	-
Kadavu	4,987	83.40	9.81	-	6.80	-	-	-	-
Lau	5,927	47.51	-	-	50.82	-	-	-	-
Lomaiviti	6,361	22.0	-	-	-	-	23.4	-	54.6
Macuata	7,926	46.29	-	-	53.71	-	-	-	-
Nadroga/Navosa	13,071	41.05	50.65	-	-	-	-	-	-
Naitasiri	8,992	-	71.21	28.79	-	-	-	-	-
Namosi	2,315	43.41	56.54	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ra	7,811	-	-	47.02	-	52.98	-	-	-
Rewa	5,193	-	59.70	40.30	-	-	-	-	-
Serua	3,345	37.28	-	62.72	-	-	-	-	-
Ba East	8,398	34.9	-	5.66	6.88	52.55	-	-	-
Ba West	10,052	34.47	-	-	-	63.53	-	-	-
Tailevu North	7,449	53.63	46.36	-	-	-	-	-	-

Tailevu South	7,110	40.38	53.59	6.03	-	-	-	-	-
Cakaudrove East	6,582	78.01	-	-	16.70				
Cakaudrove West	7,920	68.94	6.94	-	24.1				
No. of seats won		4	5	1	3	3	-	-	1
Fijian Urban Constituencies									
North East	10,182	68.94	6.94	-	24.1				
North West	12,342	32.77	-	-	67.23	-	-	-	-
South West	9,475	43.24	56.76	-	-	-	-	-	-
Suva City	9,191	42.22	57.78	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tamavua/Laucala	10,014	45.19	54.81	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nasinu	9,096	49.57	50.42	-	-	-	-	-	-
No. of seats won		1	4	-	-	1	-	-	-
Total No. Of Seats For Each Political Party		5	9	1	3	4			1

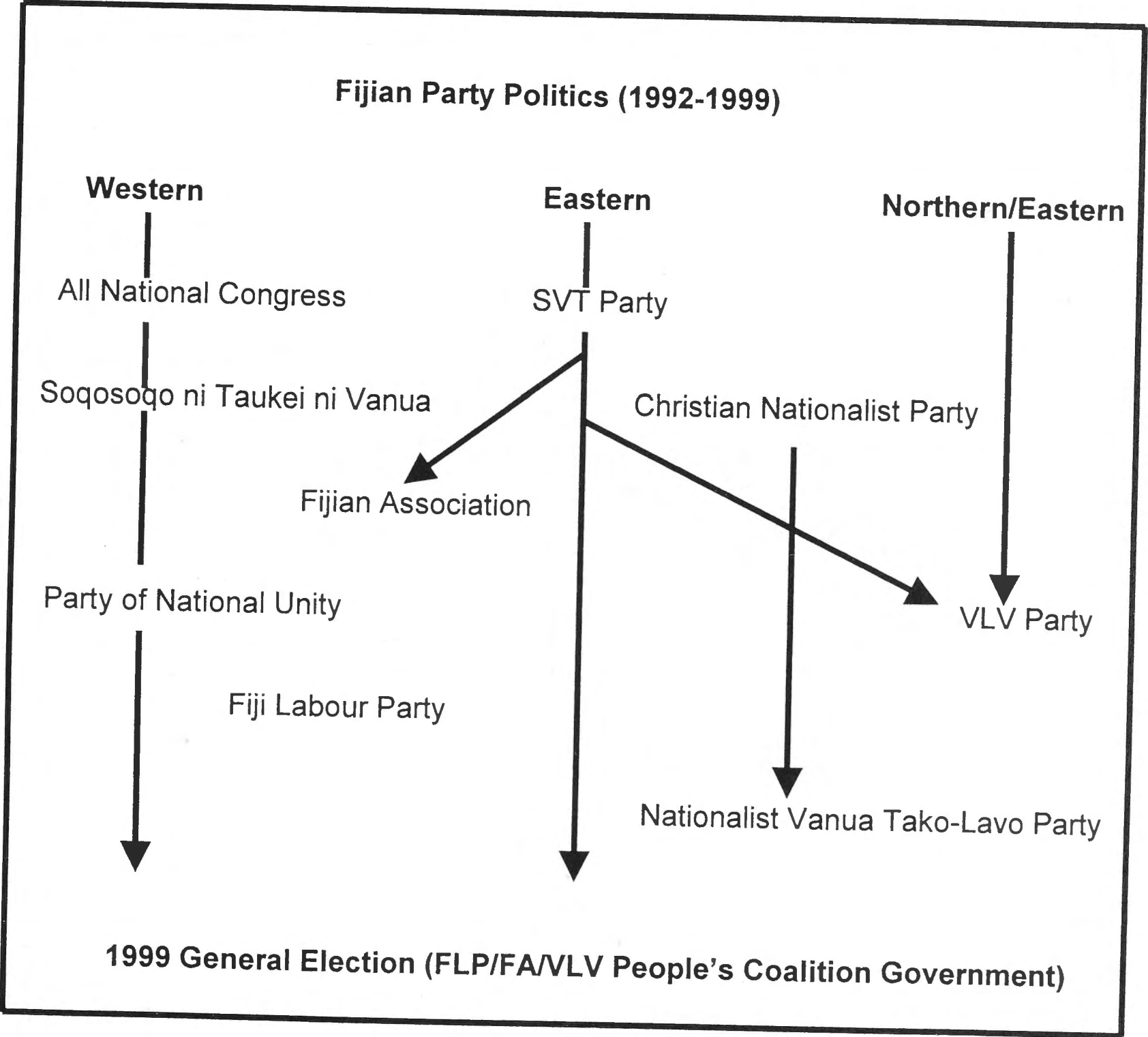
(Source: *The Fiji Times*, May 20, 1999)

As the election results indicate, the 1999 election ended the seven-year reign of the SVT, even though Prime Minister Rabuka won in his constituency. His popularity in his provincial constituency and in his province was not extended to other provinces in Fiji where newly formed political parties dominated. The defeat of the SVT in a way directly affected the Bose Levu Vakaturaga in its capacity as a supposed neutral and overall decision making institution for indigenous Fijians. Its decision to form a political party inevitably implied its

subscription to a particular party ideology. This weakened its role as an overall and neutral arbitrator amongst the indigenous population as well as other multi-ethnic citizens of Fiji.

The defeat of the SVT, brought to a close an era of Fijian political evolution in which the traditional chiefly political leaders, whose leadership was strengthened by a socially constructed orthodoxy, came to an end. Between 1960 and 1999 party politics was influenced by the influences of the past. The diagram below illustrates phase IV of Fijian party politics from 1992 to 1999.

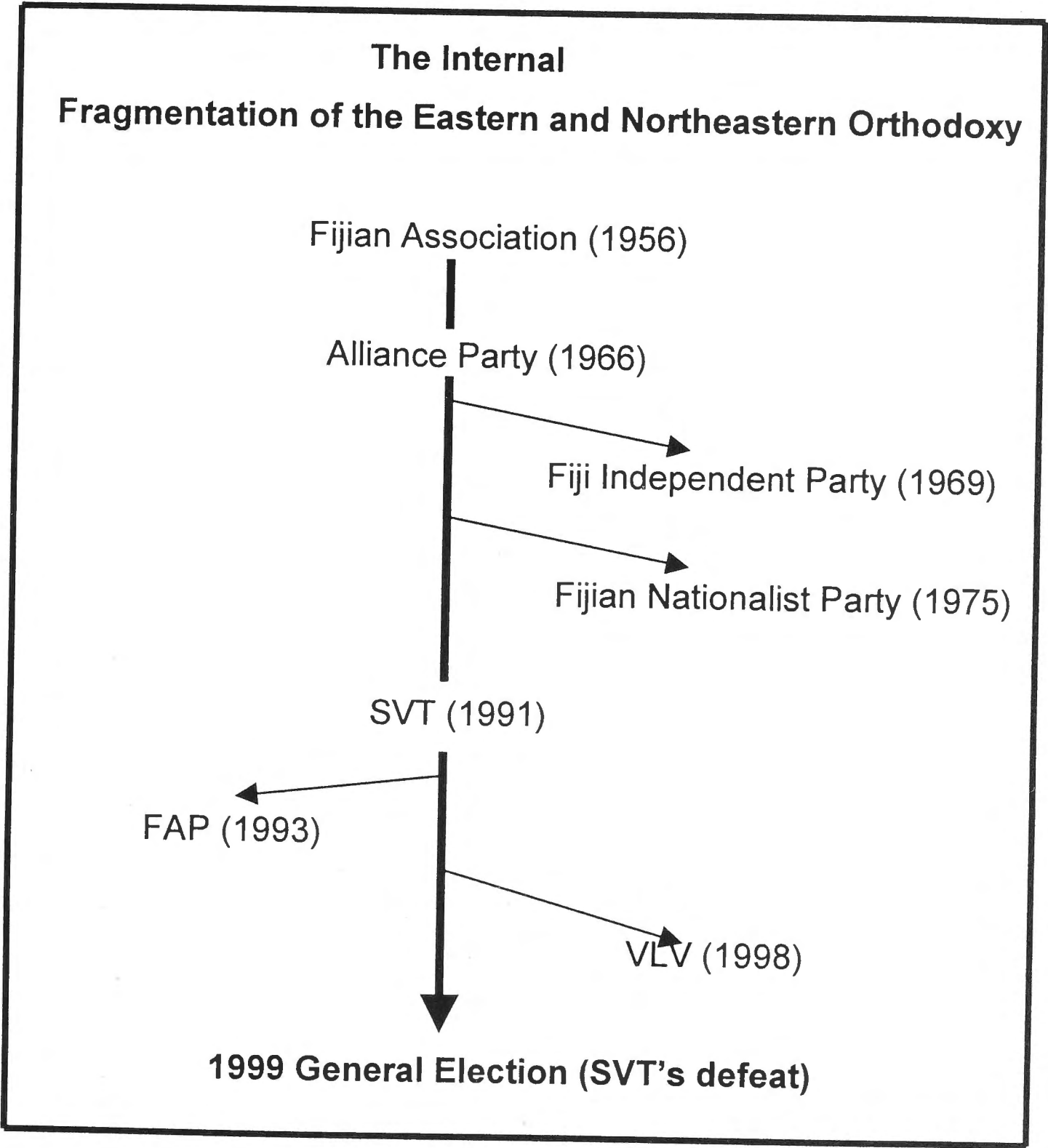
Figure 17: Phase IV of Fijian Party Politics (1992-1999)



The diagram highlights an increasing regional nature in Fijian party formation in the fourth phase of Fijian party politics under study, as Fijians identified more with the interests of their vanua and regions against a backdrop of an ongoing and consistent attempt to promote the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy

through party politics. By 1999, the final fragmentation of the orthodoxy was evident in the election results with the emergence of new parties, a re-strengthening of the multiracial Fiji Labour Party leading to the defeat of the SVT. The diagram below highlight the internal fragmentation of the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy through party politics.

Figure 18: The Internal Fragmentation of the Eastern and Northeastern Orthodoxy Through Party Politics



The diagram indicate an overall future path of Fijian party formation as the grand parties disintegrate and consequently facilitate the emergence of new parties.

Chapter Summary

The formation of the SVT, which followed the period of state-directed political development (1987-1991), was only a temporary solution to Fijian political unity, attempted through party politics. Political challenge and dissent through the continued formation of new political parties and dissenting political groups began concurrently with the resurrection of the old Fijian Association through the SVT. The main arguments used to rationalize the 1987 coups were not enough to persuade all indigenous Fijians to subscribe under one grand Fijian political party. Fijian cultural diversity and competing legitimacies, after all, were too powerful and complex to manipulate under one hierarchy and orthodoxy.

State-directed intervention in Fiji's political system created its own dynamics as conflicts and contradictions emerged leading to the formation of new political parties. Even prior to the formation of the SVT party, alternative parties had already been formed. These included the All National Congress, the New Labour Movement, the Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua, the New National Democratic Party, and the Christian Fijian Nationalist Party. They challenged the basis of legitimacy out of which the SVT as a party was created. It was an indirect and powerful challenge to the legitimacy claim of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga. The fragmentation of the SVT as a political party beginning with the formation of the Fijian Association Party in 1993 and later the VLV in 1998 marked the continued fragmentation of the tenets which united the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy.

In the fourth phase of Fijian party politics, fragmentation began with the split within SVT and the consequent formation of Kamikamica's Fijian Association Party in 1993. The FAP's political power base in Tailevu and Naitasiri, part of the Matanitu of Kubuna, internally challenged the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy through its Tovata version as articulated by the SVT. As mentioned in Chapter Six, leadership within the SVT party became a contested ground even before the formation of the FAP in 1993. The influence of both traditional and modern matanitu rivalry, as well as the conflict arising from commoner versus chiefly leadership, appeared strong in the rhetorics of provincial voices regarding leadership within the SVT. In a meeting of Tailevu chiefs on Bau in 1992, the chiefs defied Rabuka's leadership style and accused him of promoting

his own personal and political interests through the SVT. Government leadership as well as the traditional leadership issue were contested.⁷⁰

The fragmentation of the SVT exposed internal power rivalry as each traditional component of the eastern and northeastern Fijian hierarchy struggled for power control. The fourth and final phase of Fijian party politics marked an era of continuous fragmentation of the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy which was originally founded on the trinity of Vanua, Lotu and Matanitu. The fragmentation of the inherited ideology of the SVT through challenges from new parties resulted in its defeat in the 1999 general election. While the infrastructure of the state-imposed SVT was thorough and elaborate, the most crucial component was lacking. This was a common political philosophy and ideology, in either the traditional or modern context, to unite all indigenous Fijians. Like the formation of its predecessor, the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party, the political strategy which was adopted to create the SVT, was similar to that which was adopted by the colonizers in their establishment of the colonial state and its various apparatuses of rule, including the system of Fijian Administration. It involved an imposition of rule from above.

While eastern and northeastern-based political parties such as the Alliance and later SVT attempted to extend and consolidate their traditional influence through party politics, political parties which emerged in western Viti Levu, although individualistic in nature, had been consistent in their challenge for the paramountcy claim. Between 1960 and 1999 there was no conscious attempt to re-create a traditional order to which all western Fijians subscribed and through which political parties aimed to protect the people. However, an observable trend in the period under study was the independent will to create alternative political parties in spite of the dominance of eastern and northeastern Fijian based political parties. In western Fiji, the role of individual power brokers like Apisai Tora was conspicuous. Like a Melanesian Big-Man, Tora's seized all opportunities to articulate his western Fijian version of Fijian paramountcy.

⁷⁰ See Matau, R. "Tailevu Chiefs Slam Rabuka", in the Fiji Times, March 20, 1992: 1.

Overall, the fourth phase of party politics exposed internal dilemmas and contradictions within Fijian society regarding power control. The formation of political parties as a means of controlling the state and government, and as a means of extending traditional empire-building, intensified between 1992 and 1999. The involvement of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga or the Great Council of Chiefs in party formation highlighted the seriousness of the dilemma. This political strategy did not only expose the institution to more challenges but threw up issues on the dual dilemma of balancing a customary chiefly role with modern leadership and power competition through party politics. Since the early 1800s, Fijian history has highlighted that customary institutions and roles have been strengthened through modern power monopoly. However, they could not be defended permanently because of continuous internal challenges. This has contributed to the rise and demise of powerful chiefdoms such as Bau and Verata and since the beginning of party politics, the dominance of Tovata and the marginalisation of Kubuna. In hindsight party politics has enabled an understanding of such intense rivalries through the backdrop of modern party formation.

Chapter eight presents a general overview of Fijian party politics between 1960 and 1999. It discusses important trends in party formation as well as issues which were articulated in the period under study, and how these consequently, will have implications for the direction of Fijian party politics. This thesis has demonstrated the influence of the past in terms of political thinking and dissent in modern party politics. New factors such as modern education and contact with other cultures, leading to the formation of multiracial alliances also inspired independent thinking and dissent amongst indigenous Fijians.

Trends and Emerging Issues in Fijian Party Politics (1960-1999)

Natural Social Cleavages and Party Formation

Fijian party politics between 1960 and 1999 consistently reflected the articulation of independent political thinking and dissent as parties formed in different regions of Fiji challenged both the Alliance Party and its replacement, the Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei and, further, the orthodoxy upon which they were founded. This competition in party politics highlighted a number of trends in Fijian society as a whole. First was that “natural social cleavages” based on cultural diversity became the foundation of regional party formation. Initially, between 1960 and 1987, the period in which the Alliance party basically predominated the Fijian political landscape, Fijian party formation concentrated in two main regions, eastern and northeastern Fiji and western Viti Levu. Between 1991 and 1999, the era of the SVT, spontaneous party formation became the hallmark of the Fijian political life. Further fragmentation of the orthodoxy in the eastern and northeastern region saw the emergence of new parties like Kamikamica’s Fijian Association party (FAP) and the Veitokani ni Lewenivanua Vakarisito (VLV). The northeastern region became a region of party formation on its own as demonstrated in the formation of the VLV, and later the Matanitu Vanua (MV) and the Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) Party.

Against the major narrative of the evolution of the eastern and northeastern orthodoxy, and its influence in the formation of the Fijian Association (1956), and the *Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei* (1991), were other equally significant narratives which explained the emergence of new political parties in different regions of Fiji. In eastern and northeastern Fiji, within the main narrative of the formation of the FA and later SVT, had been sub-narratives of internal rivalries in the main historical discourse, leading to dissent and fragmentation and consequently, the formation of alternative breakaway political parties. These included the Fiji Independent Party in 1969, the Fijian Nationalist Party in 1975, the Fijian Association Party in 1993, and the VLV in 1998. Party makers in eastern and northeastern Fiji, like Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Viliame Savu, Sakeasi Butadroka, Sitiveni Rabuka, Josevata Kamikamica and Ratu Inoke Tabualevu, used the existing traditional socio-political hierarchical formations in the east and northeast as foundations of their party. The VLV for example, used the Christian tenet as a foundation on which to anchor its party as well as a basis to resurrect the fragmented orthodoxy.

On a similar note but of a slightly different nature, party formation in some regions like in western Viti Levu also continued throughout the thirty-nine years under study. Important individuals like Apisai Tora, Isikeli Nadalo and Ratu Osea Gavidu, emerged as individual party makers and concurrently fought for greater western Fijian political recognition. As explained in this thesis, the egalitarian nature of western Fijian society reflected the individualistic orientation of political parties which emerged there. Western Fijian political parties were confined within the *vanua* in which they emerged reflecting the independent nature of each *vanua* as well as the difficulty of extending or imposing political influence beyond the traditional jurisdiction of each socio-political boundary. Unlike the tendency for grand party formation in eastern and northeastern Fiji, that in western Viti Levu continued on an individualistic basis throughout the thirty nine years under study.¹ Against this backdrop of individualism and the desire for political recognition, western political parties were also involved in multiracial politics as seen in the case of Tora and Nadalo

¹ Prior to the 2001 general election, Apisai Tora again initiated the formation of the "Bai Kei Viti" (BKV) Party in the province of Ba in western Viti Levu.

joining the Federation Party in 1968. Later, Bavadra and other western Fijians supported the Fiji Labour Party.

Multiracial Politics

A number of Fijian politicians have consistently supported the philosophy of multiracialism in Fiji's politics. Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's Alliance Party was founded on the ideology of multiracialism and extended its philosophy in its seventeen years of post-colonial leadership in Fiji. The National Federation Party has had indigenous Fijians. Dr. Bavadra's, Fiji Labour Party and National Federation Party Coalition government also attempted to continue the multiracial philosophy in 1987 but was prevented by the 1987 military coups.

Multiracial politics in Fiji is an inevitable part of a multiracial post-colonial society, as it has highlighted that Fijians cannot be prevented from joining or forming multiracial parties as this is not only a modern democratic right but more important is that Fiji's diverse societies have coexisted for over a hundred years and will continue to do so into the future. Additionally, Fijians belong to diverse cultural groups and cannot be subjugated under a monolithic political hierarchy. The formation of another Fijian multiracial party in 2005, the New Alliance Party, by a high chief from northeastern Fiji, indicates that multiracial politics will remain a permanent feature of the Fijian political discourse². Current Fijian political leaders who have advocated the need for multiracial politics are Filipe Bole, former Alliance and SVT Cabinet Minister, and Sitiveni Rabuka, 1987 coup leader. Rabuka realized that the only way forward for Fiji was to embrace a multiracial platform in terms of political leadership. He then facilitated the review of the 1990 Constitution which came into being to explain and justify his coups. Rabuka explained:

I believe that we should really move away from ethnic politics. Only then can we really have a new generation of meritocracy. We move away from our traditional aristocracy and we move away from the national corruption that we now have of seeing that we have incapable people in highly paid positions.³

Experience through political leadership taught Rabuka that the only way forward for Fiji was to embrace multiethnic tolerance where all citizens of Fiji could

² Ratu Epeli Ganilau formed the New Alliance in 2005.

³ Interview with former Prime Minister Major General Sitiveni Rabuka, 17 May, 2004, Suva, Fiji.

participate together in different spheres of life. This is what Rabuka referred to as the "politics of moderation".⁴ This probably explains his support for the controversial provision of the multi-party cabinet in the 1997 Constitution as an attempt to facilitate the working together of different political parties in Cabinet. However, Rabuka also acknowledged the impracticality of the provision of a multi-party Cabinet especially in circumstances where two political parties have opposing ideologies as in the case of the SDL/MV Coalition and the Fiji Labour Party.⁵ However, he still argued that no one really knows whether the provision for a multi-party Cabinet can work until it is put into practice.⁶ Rabuka now says that the only way forward for Fiji is to move away from ethnic politics and adopt the multiracial philosophy.⁷

Filipe Bole, although once an ardent supporter of ethnic politics, is now an advocator of multiracial politics. Extreme racism expressed through protest and violence prior to and after the events of May 19, 2000, caused Bole to think seriously about the idea of embracing and promoting democracy through party politics. Bole explained that as a young civil servant in the Ministry of Education in the early 1960s, he recalled the non-ethnic nature of his work environment when members of the two major ethnic groups simply worked together for the betterment of Fiji. He learned a lot from A. D. Patel who was then Member for Social Services. Patel was keen in seeing the development of education in Fiji and contributed tremendously to this cause. Such positive work ethics and environment influenced Bole that the only way forward for Fiji is to introduce a political culture of tolerance amongst all its citizens. One way to realize this is through the promotion of multiethnic political parties. Bole argued that:

Politics in any country determines what happens in all aspects of life. It determines how the economy runs...whether there will be people coming to Fiji both in terms of people visiting and people investing in the country. If politics is too hot for most people to visit this country then we lose the confidence...through stability comes confidence and through that comes development and investment⁸

⁴ Dr Tupeni Baba also adopted the politics of moderation when he formed his New Labour Unity party. Interview with Dr Tupeni Baba, 8 February, 2002. Suva, Fiji.

⁵ See Rabuka, S. 2004. "Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei: The New Journey". Personal Collection of researcher. Obtained during Interview with former Prime Minister Major General Sitiveni Rabuka, 17 May 2004, Suva, Fiji.

⁶ Interview with former Prime Minister Major General Sitiveni Rabuka, 17 May, 2004. Suva, Fiji.

⁷ Interview with Major General Sitiveni Rabuka, 17 May, 2004, Suva, Fiji.

⁸ Interview with Filipe Bole, 11 September, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

Herein lies a real crisis of within Fijian society, when the voice of reason is suppressed or marginalized by government or those in powerful positions in the name of ethnicity.

Articulation of Fijian Paramountcy by Different Political Parties

The military coups in 1987 highlighted a number of developments within Fijian society between 1960 and 1999. First was the different articulation of the paramountcy of indigenous Fijian rights by different political parties and political groups throughout the period under study. In eastern Fiji, the Fiji Independent Party, formed in 1969 demanded indigenous Fijian paramountcy in terms of entrenching Fijian rights and overall political control in the 1970 constitution. These demands were directed at the eastern and northeastern chiefs in the Fijian Association. Sakeasi Butadroka's Fijian Nationalist Party slogan, "Fiji for the Fijians", reflected the nationalists' idealization of Fijian paramountcy. They directed their demand against the eastern and northeastern chiefly elites in the Alliance party and against the dominance of the Indo-Fijian business class. Their demand captured 20% of Fijian votes in the April 1977 election which resulted in the first Alliance defeat at the polls. In May, 1987, Rabuka's attempt to "save a proud race from a sad ending", resulted in the execution of two military coups in the same year. His articulation of Fijian paramountcy ended with the review of the 1990 Constitution which was formulated after his coups. Perhaps, his advocacy of the 1990 constitution demonstrated a genuine concern on the need for multiracial politics in Fiji. Additionally, he may have realized that a blanket endorsement of Fijian rights was problematic. George Speight also expounded his own version of Fijian paramountcy during his 2000 coup. Concealed in the rights were diverse forms of philosophies and idealizations based on natural social cleavages.

Western Viti levu political parties have also consistently articulated their version of Fijian rights throughout the period under study. Their demands were directed against the eastern and northeastern political elites and the Alliance Party. The earlier demands for a general recognition of western Fijians as articulated by Tora and Nadalo in the 1960s were refined by Gavidia in his Western United Front Party. Other articulations of western Fijian demands were championed by

parties like the Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua (STV) Party in 1992 and the Party of National Unity in 1998.

After the 1987 coups a version of Viti Levu demands was seen in the attempt to form a Viti Levu Council of Chiefs (VLCC) and a “Matanitu ni Yasayasa Vaka-Ra” or Western Confederacy. The articulation of these demands by a group of Viti Levu chiefs and “lewenivanua” (vanua members) highlighted the complexity and diversity of the conceptualization of Fijian rights. Additionally, Fijian rights meant different things to different socio-political groups. In 2000, the articulation of western Fijian rights resulted in a move by western Fijian chiefs and people to secede from eastern Fiji. It resulted in the appointment of Ratu Josefa Iloilo as the first western Fijian chief to be President of Fiji.⁹ The late Tui Vitogo, Ratu Sovasova explained that western Fijians were tired of the ongoing squabble for power in Suva since 1987.¹⁰

Fijian Nationalism

The proponents of Fijian nationalism demand the paramountcy of Fijian interests and expound on the recognition of Fijian rights. These rights have been understood and articulated in diverse ways by political groups and political parties. Butadroka’s version of nationalism while directed at the expulsion of Indo-Fijians from Fiji, was also directed at Fijians from the maritime provinces like Lau, most of whom now live on Viti Levu. Nationalism was manifested in different ways and against different groups.

Since Fijians belong to diverse socio-political groups, the only common rallying point for nationalist groups in the period under study was their “anti-Indian” rhetoric. The Taukei movement utilized this ideology to unite their supporters during periods of destabilization. However, this was not enough to restore an orthodoxy, nor unite the many political parties which were formed in the period under study. Unity through Fijian nationalism in their versions which were articulated between 1960 and 1999 concealed powerful intra-Fijian rivalry

⁹ Interview with Ratu Osea Gavidli, 19 May, 2004, Suva, Fiji.

¹⁰ Interview with Ratu Jovesa Sovasova, 9 November, 2002, Vitogo village, Ba Province. All three coups in Fiji happened in Suva, the capital which is located in south east Viti Levu.

between Viti Levu people against islanders; Kubuna against Tovata; eastern Viti Levu against western Viti Levu; Viti Levu people against Lauans, etc.

Nationalistic demands influenced Fijian political culture between 1960 and 1999. They retarded any logical attempt to formulate genuine solutions for Fijian economic marginalisation. Consistent demands beginning with the Fiji Independent Party in 1969, the Fijian Nationalist Party in 1975 and the SVT in 1991 influenced the particular form of racist strategy that the Fijian political discourse adopted after 1991. Within Fijian society, party formation after 1987 was a marathon. By 1991 dissent through party formation had resurfaced. Again, fragmented Fijian demands like those of pioneering parties were seriously pursued by new parties. Parties which promoted multiracial philosophies were inevitably marginalized and viewed as useless to the Fijian cause. In an ethnically charged political environment like Fiji, defending the philosophy of multiracialism became an impossible pursuit.

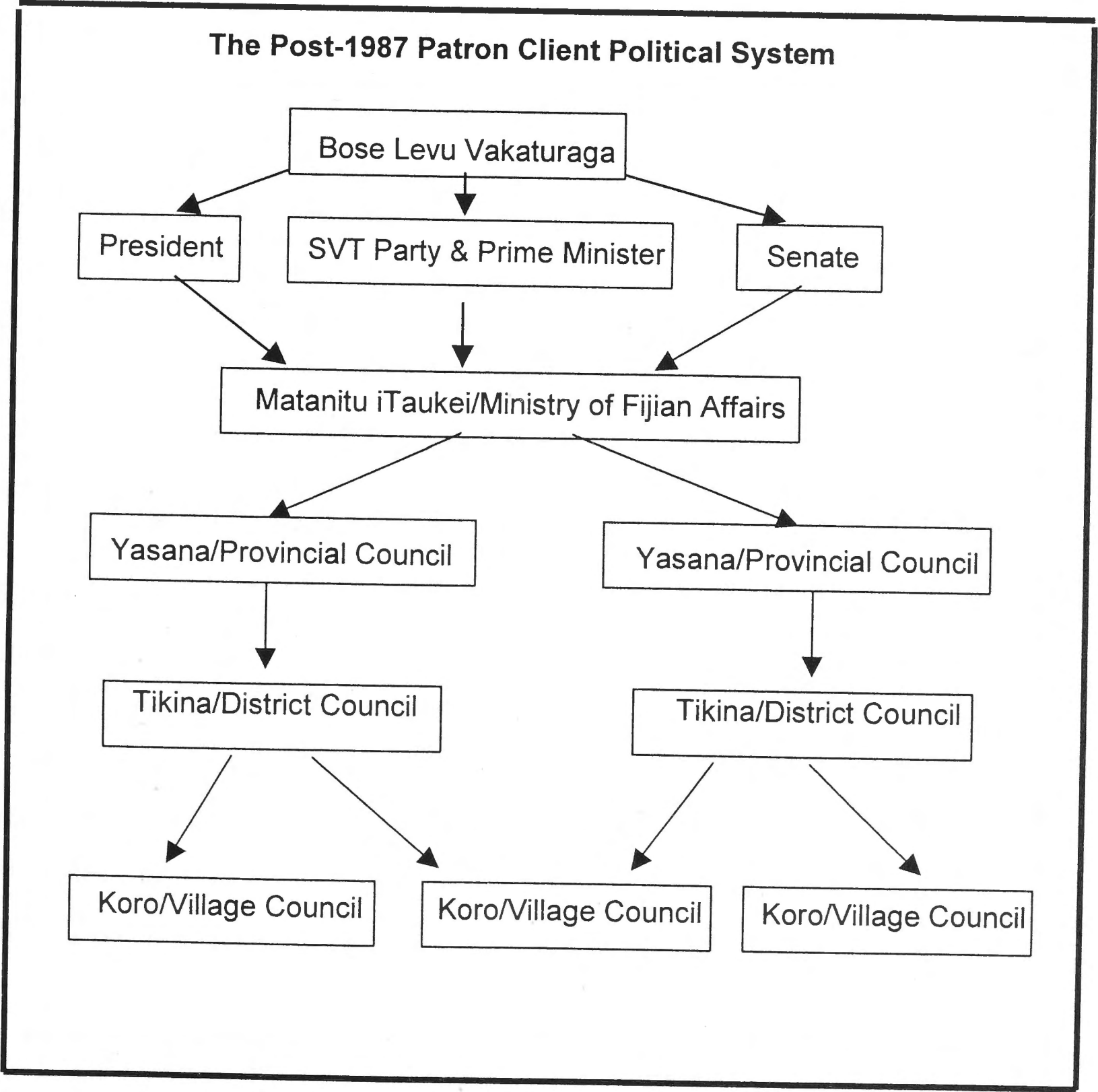
A dangerous strategy employed through ethnic politics under Rabuka's SVT was the use of the "Fijian paramountcy" philosophy as a means of obtaining loan for a few as seen in the abuse of the National Bank of Fiji, resulting in its collapse. It was evident that "the promise" did not reach the majority of indigenous Fijians, including the many who supported the coups. Between 1992 and 1999, the nationalist ideology first sown by the Fijian Chamber of Commerce, had been elevated and reconstructed in new ways by the SVT and later by Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase's SDL/MV government.

The Politics of Patron Clientelism

Patron clientelism was a prominent feature of Fijian party politics in the period under study. Following the establishment of the colonial state and its Matanitu iTaukei or system of indirect rule, the Soqosoqo iTaukei or Fijian Association emerged. Grassroot Fijians accepted the Fijian Association through its Matanitu iTaukei medium. Chiefly politicians used the Matanitu iTaukei to disseminate political information and propaganda. Since the introduction of party politics and the lack of understanding of the party system, the majority of Fijians viewed party politics solely through the Matanitu iTaukei and its chiefly politicians. Initially there was little or no distinction at all between the Matanitu I Taukei and

the Soqosoqo iTaukei. Long term support for the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party was facilitated by the fusion of the institution and the party. In this context, initially the patrons maintained their clients loyalty out of the clients respect for the social rank of the patrons. Later on, promises and goods were also used to maintain the loyalty of the clients. State directed political development between 1988 and 1991 strengthened the politics of patron clientelism within Fijian society, again through the formation of the SVT out of the Matanitu iTaukei as illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 19: The Post-1987 Patron Client Political System



Both the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance Party and the SVT party were able to utilize the Matanitu iTaukei infrastructure, extending the intricate network of patron clientelism from the upper echelons of power to the grass root clients in the koro or villages.

While the first generation of chiefly politicians like Mara, Cakobau and Ganilau were able to get votes with minimal promises to the people because of the extension of their traditional jurisdiction in modern party politics, the non-chiefly leaders like Rabuka had to do a lot more work to command the trust of Fijians. Rabuka only enjoyed seven years of Prime Ministership because he lost the “promised cause” through the acceptance of the review of the 1990 Constitution which was a result of his coups. However, before he lost the cause, his practice of patron clientelism caused the collapse of the National Bank of Fiji, resulting on access burden for Fiji’s taxpayers.¹¹

A number of critical issues emerge from the practice of patron clientelism in Fijian politics. Since 1987 and the emphasis on upholding the paramountcy of indigenous Fijian interests, Fijian political parties have tended to compete in promises to satisfy Fijian interests. In this process, competition for Fijian votes implies the adoption of modified strategies for vote buying such as the distribution of farm equipment or outboard motors.¹² This practice becomes problematic. First, that all tax payers end up paying for misspent money. Second, that clientelism supports and exacerbates a dependency syndrome and leaves the client at the mercy of the patrons. For instance, a person who does not own land may be given agricultural equipment which is not needed. Third, clientelism overlooks the need for a genuine assessment of the needs of indigenous Fijians as well as other citizens of Fiji and offer long term solutions for poverty and underdevelopment. Fourth, clientelism perpetuates corruption as seen in the case of the collapse of the National Bank of Fiji. The debts of a few became a public burden to all tax payers.¹³ On the grounds of human rights, the patrons deprive the rights of clients to be able to think and form their own opinions independently.

¹¹ See also Grynberg, R., Munro, D. and White, M. 2002. *Crisis: Collapse of the National Bank of Fiji*. Crawford House Publishing, Adelaide: 1-155 and See also “The Chaos at NBF: The Big Loans Who Got What? The Real Story of How an Obsession with Market Share Dragged the National Bank of Fiji to the Brink of Insolvency” in *The Review*, July 1995: 16-32.

¹² See the case of the Agriculture Scam in Fiji prior to the 2001 general election in *The Fiji Times*, June 21, 2002: 1, 3, 11. See also *The Daily Post*, June 21, 2002: 1, 3.

¹³ This was the case of the agriculture scam of 2001. In my interview with Ratu Epeli Mataitini of the SVT Party, he explained that a high ranking manager in a company which distributed agriculture equipment, tools and products to the Ministry of Agriculture, was later sacked by the company when he began to make money and started his own business through transaction with government. Interview with Ratu Epeli Mataitini, 22 October, 2002. Lomanikoro, Rewa.

Categories of Fijian Party Leaders

Fijian party politics between 1960 and 1999 produced at least four categories of party leaders. In east and northeast Fiji two major categories of party leaders emerged between 1960 and 1999. The first category was the chiefly politician who became a modern political leader through a combination of ascribed status and achievement or meritocracy through modern education. Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Fiji's first and longest serving Prime Minister, was a classic case in this category. He was a product of the eastern chiefly institution and became the first generation of post-colonial leaders who were prepared for leadership during the period of decolonisation. A combination of chiefly status with education facilitated and reinforced his assumption of political leadership in Fiji. Mara represented a dual ideology of liberal democracy as well as the traditional orthodoxy in which his social rank was founded.

The second category of political leaders emerged in western Viti Levu. They were products of an egalitarian socio-political system. Their political influence were more localized within a vanua or in a number of related vanua. Isikeli Nadalo, Apisai Tora, and Ratu Osea Gavidi were examples of such leaders. Support for Ratu Osea Gavidi's Western United Front for example, was confined mostly amongst the pine landowners in the province of Nadroga/Navosa. While Gavidi and Nadalo confined their political involvement in western Viti Levu, Tora on the other hand, was unique in straddling the east and west divide in his involvement in party politics.

Tora was a product of such an egalitarian socio-political system combined with his unique political strategies. His effort to form parties spanned over four decades of party politics in Fiji. Between 1960 and 1999, Tora embraced all ideological spectrums, from unionism, multiracialism, and itaukei nationalism. In 1960 he formed the Western Democratic party and in 1966 he co-founded the National Democratic Party with Isikeli Nadalo. By 1968, the NDP had joined forces with the Federation Party under the new name National Federation Party. He remained in the NFP until 1977. Between 1981 and 1987, Tora crossed the political divide from west to east and joined Mara's Alliance elites of eastern and northeastern Fiji. He was active in the Taukei destabilization marches prior to the 1987 military coups. After the military coups of 1987 he again left the

eastern and northeastern political circle to form the ANC Party in his village, Natalau. He was however, unsuccessful in the elections of 1992 and 1994. Nevertheless, in 1998 he facilitated the formation of PANU but again lost the election, although his party formed a coalition government with the FLP, FAP and VLV. Tora was also vying for Prime Ministership in the FLP/FAP/PANU/VLV Coalition government prior to the 1999 general election.¹⁴ However, he lost his seat in the 1999 election and joined the Taukei Movement destabilization marches prior to the 2000 George Speight coup. In 2001, he distanced himself from PANU and created yet another western political party, the Bai kei Viti, literally translated as “the Fijian Barricade”. The Tui Vitogo, aptly describes Tora as, “O Tora sa iTora ga”, implying that Tora’s ways are uniquely his and it is only Tora that can understand Tora well.¹⁵

The third category of party leaders in eastern and northeastern Fiji included Butadroka and Savu. Since the formation of Savu’s Fiji Independent Party in 1969 and later Butadroka’s Fijian Nationalist Party in 1975, the main ideology of the nationalists’ revolved around maintaining the paramountcy of indigenous Fijian interests. The Fijian Nationalist Party, now known as the Nationalist Vanua Tako Lavo Party, is the longest surviving Fijian political party, undergoing occasional name change in its journey. The power base of Fijian nationalists was in Butadroka’s province of Rewa and neighbouring provinces of Serua, Naitasiri and Tailevu, but sprinkling of nationalist advocates can be found in all the provinces throughout Fiji. Butadroka and Savu confined their political activities mostly in eastern and northeastern Fiji.

The fourth category of Fijian leaders observed between 1960 and 1999 were commoner leaders like Bavadra, whose challenge to chiefly candidates marked an end of the domination of chiefs in party politics. Rabuka, on the other hand, appeared on the political scene when he was “used” to return the chiefs to their former glory. The irony was that he contributed directly to their decline in party politics. After his political ascendancy, Rabuka stated that chiefs should no longer have to compete in modern party politics, compromising their inherited

¹⁴ See also Field, M., Baba, T. and Baba, U.N. 2005. *Speight of Violence: Inside Fiji’s 2000 Coup*. Reeds Publishing, New Zealand: 51

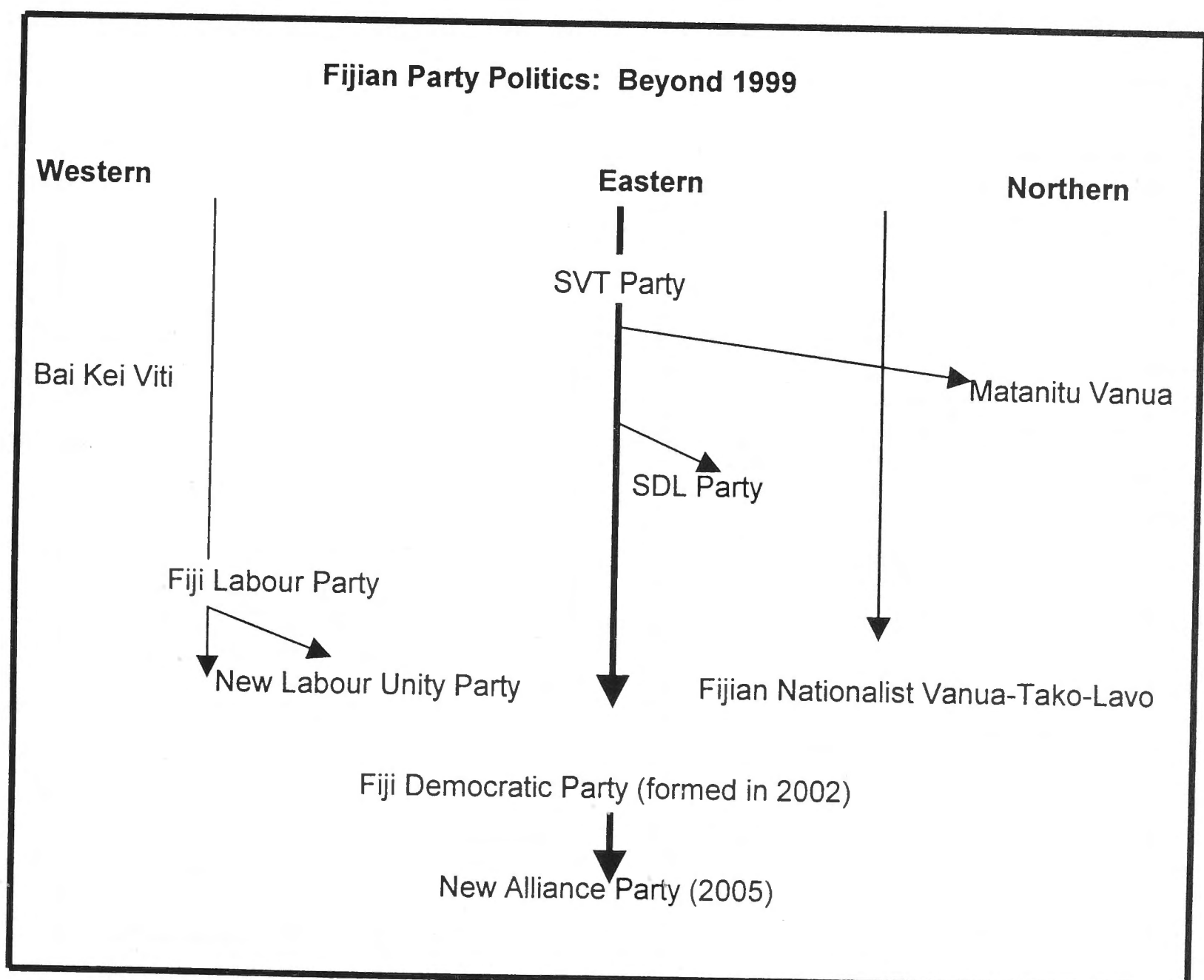
¹⁵ Interview with the Tui Vitogo, Ratu Jovesa Sovasova. 9 November, 2002, Vitogo village, Ba Province.

statuses but must remain in their traditional leadership roles.¹⁶ The defeat of Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's Alliance Party in 1987 brought to an end the dominance of chiefly politicians in Fijian party politics. Within Fijian society, Bavadra, Rabuka and Qarase all represented the commoner face of modern Fijian leaders.

A Post Script: Party Politics Beyond 2000 Addressing the Fijian Cause Through the SDL

Party formation continued after the period under study. The regional nature of party formation extended to other regions of Fiji like Lau in the east and Cakaudrove in the northeast. This continued beyond 1999 as illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 20: Fijian Party Politics Beyond 1999



The diagram shows that party formation continued in almost all regions of Fiji.

¹⁶ Sharpham, J. 2000. *Rabuka of Fiji: The Authorised Biography of Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka*. Central Queensland University Press, Queensland: 304

The Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) Party

The formation of the SDL in 2001 turned into specific policies what earlier parties like the FIP and the Fijian Nationalist Party could only promise through election campaigns. Given internal contradictions within Fijian society which contributed to the formation and fragmentation of the SVT and the many conflicts between the SVT and its breakaway faction the FAP and VLV, joining any of these political parties, for Qarase, was tantamount to boarding sinking ships. The SDL attempted to deliver on the promise the SVT had failed to do.

In retrospect, the SDL emerged as another eastern Fijian political party with a new image but confronted with old issues. Although it was formed as a product of a political crisis, unlike the SVT and the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance party, it did not receive direct sanction of the Fijian Administration or the Bose Levu Vakaturaga. Its formation marked a point of departure in Fijian party politics when a Fijian political party which attempts to establish itself as a mainstream Fijian party found itself without direct Fijian institutional support. However, to be recognized by the Fijian Administration as well as the Bose Levu Vakaturaga and all Fijians, the SDL attempted to articulate all major Fijian issues which were voiced by earlier Fijian political parties since party politics began in the 1960s. These were ongoing issues which were considered as root causes for the execution of the 1987 military coups as well as the May 19, 2000 civilian coup. The SDL attempted to address these issues through what it terms as the Blueprint for Affirmative Action for indigenous Fijians and Rotumans.

The party manifesto explains affirmative action as:

Special programmes of assistance to help remove the economic differences between the Fijians and the other communities... These are in line with policies in place since independence and are provided for in the Constitution... At the moment, the Fijians are falling behind in education, the professions, business and income... The affirmative action Blueprint is about our vision of a country where different ethnic communities live in peace, harmony and prosperity. It is about creating a foundation for a stable and prosperous Fiji. It affirms our commitment to securing basic economic rights and a fairer division of wealth... inequities and inequalities... pose a threat to our social stability. Failure to address these would put society at peril and deny social justice to a large section of the population.¹⁷

¹⁷ See "Good Leadership For a Secure and Stable Fiji. Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua, the SDL's plan for Prosperous Fiji. manifesto Summary 2001": 8

An analysis of the SDL party manifesto reveals an attempt to incorporate and address mainstream indigenous Fijian grievances which the party assumes have been partially addressed in fragmented ways by the numerous Fijian political parties since party politics began in the 1960s. While the overall SDL vision is one of a "Fiji of peace, multi-racial harmony and prosperity", the major pillar providing support towards peace, harmony and prosperity, according to the SDL party, is to confront and address critical Fijian under-development issues. These issues are to be addressed through the SDL Fijian Blueprint.¹⁸ The Blueprint identifies specific areas of Fijian underdevelopment and provides special policy provisions to be followed for the advancement of indigenous Fijians in such specific areas.

Chartering the Fijian Cause Under the Matanitu Vanua (MV) or Conservative Alliance Party

The term "Matanitu Vanua" literally implies "a government which is founded on the traditional structure of matanitu and vanua". Traditional consensus through the matanitu and vanua gave rise to the formation of the Matanitu Vanua Party. After the May 2000 coup, chiefs and people from different vanua in Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata, the three provinces in Vanua Levu, decided to form a new Fijian political party to be called Matanitu Vanua after the political uncertainty brought about as a result of the May 2000 crisis. How did the concept of Matanitu Vanua arise? Prior to colonization, indigenous Fijians were governed by their chiefs and traditional leaders through a hierarchy of structures, at the apex of which were the vanua and in parts of eastern and northern Fiji, the matanitu as well. So the use of the term Matanitu Vanua was culturally symbolic in the sense that strategies for building a traditional form of government, based on consensus, were adopted by members of different vanua in Vanua Levu to found a modern institution like a political party. This vanua consensus founded the MV party.

Fijians who formed the Matanitu Vanua or Conservative Alliance Party had been members of other political parties prior to the political crisis of 19 May, 2000. The majority had been members of Rabuka's SVT party. Ratu Rakuita

¹⁸ See "Good Leadership for a Secure and Stable Fiji: Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua, the SDL's Plan for a Prosperous Fiji. Manifesto Summary 2001": 1-12

Vakalalabure, the deputy leader of the Matanitu Vanua party, contested the by-elections in 1999 as a SVT candidate to replace Rabuka who had become the Chairman of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga. Vakalalabure explained that the signs for the SVT were on the wall when it won only eight seats during the 1999 general election. He stated that:

The SVT was not going to the people and the only way to resurrect the objectives of the SVT was through another party...The SVT with its track record, the purpose of its formation and what it had done were so contradictory. It could not justify sustaining its interests¹⁹

Prior to May 19, 2000, the eight SVT members in parliament were confused about the direction of the party. The original philosophy behind the formation of the party was lost with the review of the 1990 Constitution. SVT members of parliament, could not do much but flowed with the tide. Rabuka, the captain, had abandoned the ship for the chairmanship of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga. After its electoral defeat, the BLV did not know what to do with its party. This political impasse was shattered by the events of May 19, 2000.

An immediate impact of the 2000 coup was the formation of the Matanitu Vanua or Conservative Alliance Party as an alternative to the SVT. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, the deputy leader of the Matanitu Vanua Party, explained that after the 1999 general election, a number of indigenous Fijians had been threatened by some initiatives and policies of the People's Coalition government. This included a proposed Land use Commission which was to determine the use of native land and by-passing the Native Land Trust Board which is the official trustee of native land and resources. From the perspective of some indigenous Fijians, such initiatives challenged the rights of the indigenous owners of resources. It implied that government had the right to determine the use of indigenous resources.²⁰

The SVT parliamentarians from Vanua Levu which included Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, Isireli Leweniqila, Ratu Inoke Kubuobola and Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, decided to return to the vanua, that is, to their constituencies in Vanua Levu and ask the chiefs and the people what they wanted. After a meeting of chiefs and people in Labasa, it was decided that a political party be

¹⁹ Interview with Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, 9 October, 2002. Parliament House, Suva, Fiji.

²⁰ Interview with Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, 9 October, 2002. Parliament House, Suva, Fiji.

formed to continue with the aspirations of 1987 which had been abandoned by Rabuka and the SVT. The Vanua Levu meeting decided that it was important to fight for Fijian rights through a political party rather than through a coup such as that attempted by Speight on 19 May, 2000.²¹

The MV was formed in Vanua Levu ahead of the SDL party. There were three major underlying issues which founded the Matanitu Vanua. The first concerns the political control of Fiji by indigenous Fijians for all time and that it must be written in the constitution. This was the "paramount demand" of the Vanua Levu chiefs and people who joined the party. They felt betrayed by Rabuka and the SVT party when the 1990 Constitution was reviewed.²²

This issue is reflected in the party constitution which states two of the main objectives of the party as:

To conserve, uphold, foster and safeguard principles of Fijian traditional and modern systems of governance, relationships; and customs conducive to the development and welfare of the Fijian people with due regard being given to God's children of different races in this country. To conserve the positions of President and Prime Minister in the hands of the Fijian people at all times and in the future and to be allied with other races in the equitable sharing of other portfolios of government and the civil service²³

The second issue had to do with the need to re-strengthen affirmative action for indigenous Fijians. Affirmative action should include special provisions such as the issuance of licenses for certain contracts and the maintenance of specific numbers in the civil service. The third issue involves the control and development of indigenous-owned resources. Legislation should be amended to enable resource owners to fully benefit from their resources. The issue regarding the amendment of legislation for agricultural leases on native land should be beneficial to landowners. In this case the Native Land Trust Act (NALTA) is considered as more beneficial to landowners than the Agricultural

²¹ Interview with Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, 9 October, 2002. Parliament House, Suva, Fiji.

²² Ratu Inoke Tabualevu, the "Matanivanua" (traditional herald) of the Tui Cakau in Somosomo, Taveuni, indicated to me during our interview that the province of Cakaudrove had also rejected the review of the 1990 Constitution. When the idea was discussed in the Cakaudrove provincial council, a number of chiefs remarked, "dou 'olota'ina sara iwaitui". In the Cakaudrove dialect, this implies, "you throw the idea right into the sea". Interview with Ratu Inoke Tabualevu, 29 October, 2002, Suva, Fiji.

²³ Constitution of the Conservative Alliance, Matanitu Vanua. 25 April, 2001. Elections Office, Suva, Fiji: 2.

Landlords and Tenants Act (ALTA). Negotiations for forest concessions for loggers should be oriented for the benefit of resource owners. Overall, members of the MV felt that political control by the new Fijian political parties is crucial for the implementation of policies and the amendment of legislation to benefit marginalized indigenous Fijians.²⁴

After the formation of the MV party in Vanua Levu, talks were also held on Viti Levu regarding possible merger with other Fijian political parties. Discussions were held at Tamavua village with a group from eastern Viti Levu. This group was led by the "Turaga Qaranivalu of Naitasiri"²⁵ who was one of the founders of the SDL party. However, with the backing of a number of high chiefs in the provinces of Naitasiri and Rewa in south eastern Viti Levu, Qarase went on to form his SDL party. Support for the MV on Viti Levu was received mostly from northern Tailevu province, where George Speight is a member of the Vanua of Naloto.²⁶ Tailevu supporters of the Matanitu Vanua joined after the party was formed.

While the crisis surrounding George Speight's May 19, 2000 coup appears ethnic in nature, the issues which emerged after the event reflected intra-Fijian dilemmas. The execution of the coup provided an opportunity for the expression of longstanding dissent. Iliesa Naituku, a member of the Vanua of Naloto, in the province of Tailevu explained the root cause of Fiji's current crisis as evolving from cession in 1874. He explained, through oral history how, Ratu Mosese Dugumoi ("Navosavakadua") confronted Ratu Seru Cakobau (chief architect of the Deed of Cession), on the issue regarding the Deed of Cession Naituku explained, Dugumoi asked Ratu Seru Cakobau:

"O sa soli Viti? O iko lewai Viti?"
Have you ceded Fiji? Do you own Fiji? ²⁷

For Naituku and other Fijians whose vanua were ceded without consent, Fiji's cession by Cakobau and his group was certainly illegal in both the traditional and modern reasoning. The controversy emerged from the fact that none of those who ceded Fiji commanded overall jurisdiction over the whole group.

²⁴ Interview with Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, 9 October, 2002. Parliament House, Suva, Fiji.

²⁵ The Turaga Qaranivalu holds one of the highest chiefly titles in Naitasiri.

²⁶ Naloto is one of the twenty vanua which comprise the province of Tailevu.

²⁷ Oral history as narrated by Ilieas Naituku, 27 October, 2002. Namena Village, Tailevu.

Since cession and the establishment of the colonial government, according to Naituku, two categories of Fijian leadership have emerged within Fijian society. The first category of leaders are those who genuinely care for the people and do not accumulate for their personal aggrandizement. The second category of leadership include Fijian leaders who will sell everything for personal accumulation. Naituku argued that these were the leaders who have led Fiji to its current state of chaos. Dugumoi and later Nawai emerged as products of political dissent in such category of leadership. How does this tie in with George Speight's coup? The majority of the marginalized grass root people in northern Tailevu and in other parts of Fiji sympathized with Speight on these grounds; as a Fijian who has again emerged to liberate the oppressed.²⁸ Herein emerges another twist to the articulation of Fijian rights and paramountcy which in the long term negates other idealization of Fijian rights.

During the George Speight crisis, various groups of Fijians were expressing different types of dissent through roadblocks, shutdown of schools and even the closure of the Monasavu hydroelectric dam in protest against non-payment of government leases,²⁹ non-payment of royalties, or disagreement with initial agreements regarding land leases. Dissent against the system lay dormant for some time and it took an agitation such as the one on May 19, 2000 to find their full expression. This is perhaps a most dangerous characteristic about ethnic politics; that the grievances of an ethnic group, genuine or otherwise, are manipulated to oust a democratically elected government which was not responsible for such grievances in the first place. It is a long-term problem in post-colonial societies where colonial legacies are problematised and directed against those in power. Their articulation, consequently leads to the emergence of politically unstable states.

Support for the Matanitu Vanua in northern Tailevu can also be explained through the overall dialectics of development and underdevelopment in this part

²⁸ Interview with Iliesa Naituku, 27 October, 2002. Namena Village, Tailevu.

²⁹ See also "Vinakati me Wali na Leqa mai Ratu Kadavulevu School (RKS)" in the Na iLalakai, 4 September, 2003: 1. The landowners of the three landowning mataqali upon which RKS is located have voiced their concern about government's arrogant attitude in neglecting to pay for land rent as well as passing in parliament the establishment of a centre for excellence at RKS without consulting landowners first. The centre for excellence is part of the SDL government's Blueprint for Fijian education.

of Viti Levu. Previous Fijian governments did not do enough to alleviate people's problems in this area. On the whole there has been a general negativism towards politicians and their pre-election promises. During the pre-elections campaign of 2001, Naituku remarked that the general feeling gauged by his father after the SDL party campaigned in his village was "keimami na sega ni vakalialiai tale", meaning, "we won't be fooled anymore".³⁰ This expressed the negative feeling of a group of Fijians who have had enough of empty promises from Fijian politicians since party politics began in the 1960s.

While support for the MV party in Vanua Levu was well defined and linked to Rabuka's unfulfilled coup promises to Fijians since the 1987 military coups, support in northern Tailevu was linked to a general feeling of long-standing dissent based past grievances. The first was a continuation of the dissent tradition as expressed by Navosavakadua and his disciple Apolosi Nawai against Bau's internal domination. The second factor had to do with unequal development which is reflected in the development of some regions of Fiji and the neglect of others. The third factor had to do with kinship support to express and strengthen socio-political solidarity. Fijian political parties which were formed in different regions basically gathered their primary support from the traditional kinship network. This is a continuation of traditional ways of politicking. During the George Speight coup, the kinship network came out in full force to rally behind him. Whether they all understood the objectives and implications of his involvement or not was irrelevant in such circumstances. Support for the person as a fellow kinsman finally transformed into support for the coup and hence the political party which was the final product and expression of dissent. Since the MV party was associated with the George Speight political agitation, such factors contributed to the support rendered to the Matanitu Vanua party in northern Tailevu. The same kind of support and reasoning was rendered to Rabuka by his relatives in Vanua Levu when he executed the two military coups in 1987. Earlier, Mara's Alliance Party as well as Qarase's SDL are fully supported by Lauans. This is a unique characteristic of modern party politics within Fijian society.

³⁰ Interview with Iliesa Naituku. 27 October, 2002, Namena village, Tailevu. Naituku's father was one of Apolosi Nawai's supporters in the Wainibuka district of Tailevu. He contributed to the "soli" (collection of money) for Nawai's Viti Kabanī.

Extending Western Fijian Demands Through Tora's "Bai Kei Viti": "Fijian Barricades"

Another political strategy was adopted by Tora in the formation of the "Bai kei Viti" (BKV) party in the province of Ba to replace the Party of National Unity (PANU). According to the late Tui Vitogo, Ratu Jovesa Sovasova, the foundation of PANU was challenged after the May 19, 2000 crisis when the SDL party began its political campaign in western Viti Levu where the politics of fear was preached. In this case, PANU, the coalition partner of the Fiji Labour Party was weakened. Party politics had caused some rift between Tora and the Ba Provincial Council during a provincial council meeting in Nailaga, Ba. It was after this meeting that Tora and Ratu Tevita Momoedonu ³¹ distanced themselves from PANU and formed a new political party in Ba. According to the Tui Vitogo, BKV was basically a front for the SDL party in Ba.³²

The BKV party constitution states its main objectives as the promotion of the special interests of indigenous Fijians which includes the advancement of their rights through socio-political and economic development. These rights are to be developed in association with those of other ethnic groups in Fiji. This is envisaged as the foundation of building a nation through the promotion of goodwill, tolerance, understanding and harmony. Also an objective in the party constitution is the strengthening of links with international organizations such as the United Nations. A special feature of the party constitution is the appeal to women voters:

Women shall have equal status with men and shall be eligible for appointment or election as representatives or delegates to any office in the organization of BKV ³³

The formation of political parties through a provincial council has been unique in the province of Ba. Like the formation of PANU, the BKV was formed through the Ba provincial council with the support of prominent vanua chiefs in the province.³⁴ While earlier political parties which were formed within the province

³¹ Both Tora and Momoedonu were rewarded by the SDL government; Tora is now a Senator and Momoedonu is Fiji's High Commissioner in Japan.

³² Interview with the Tui Vitogo, Ratu Jovesa Daurua, 9 November, 2003. Vitogo village, Ba province.

³³ See Constitution of the Bai Kei Viti (BKV) party, Elections office, Suva, Fiji: 2

³⁴ See Extraordinary issue of Fiji Government Gazette, 6 June, 2001, Government of Fiji. Reference EL 6/39/27 for the registration of the BKV party and the names of the vanua chiefs in Ba who registered the party as office bearers and members.

were formed by individuals like Apisai Tora, those which were formed in the fourth phase of party politics in Fiji, were founded in the vanua through the province. In Ba the province became the basis for articulating western Fijian demands and strengthening of political power through business ventures. The province of Ba has emerged as one of the most prosperous Fijian provinces. Eastern based political parties such as the Fijian Association arm of the Alliance party and the SVT party, although not directly founded as provincial parties, survived through the backing of the Fijian Administration and the Bose Levu Vakaturaga.

The formation of political parties in Ba and in other parts of western Viti Levu demonstrates the continuation of party formation through regional cleavages. This trend extended to Vanua Levu in northern Fiji with the formation of the Matanitu Vanua Party in 2001. However, in Vanua Levu, while vanua chiefs were also involved in the formation of the Matanitu Vanua, provincial councils were not directly involved in the formation of political parties like in Ba. In terms of Fijian political support, the various vanua in Vanua Levu used to subscribe to mainstream eastern Fijian political parties such as the Alliance and the SVT. There was a fragmentation of this unity after the review of the 1990 Constitution.

The Future of the Chiefly Sponsored SVT Party

Prior to the 2001 general election, the Bose Levu Vakaturaga severed its direct support for the political party which it had created to unite all indigenous Fijians following the 1987 coups. Reasons behind this move are many and varied. However, there are a few fundamental reasons which need discussion. In terms of party politics, perhaps, first and foremost has been the realization that the espoused unity under the SVT was an impossible endeavour. Fijians in different regions of Fiji continued to form their own political parties after the coups in 1987, demonstrating the powerful influence of independent political thinking and dissent which is characteristic of Fijian cultural diversity. A new strategy to unite Fijians through party politics had to be found. The SVT became unpopular with Fijian supporters of the 1987 coups after Rabuka changed his political vision and ideology and embraced multiracial politics midway through his political leadership.

The Future of Fijian Party Politics – A Future of Coalitions?

This thesis has demonstrated through Fijian party politics between 1960 and 1999 that the socially constructed nature of Fijian society is under challenge and that natural social cleavages will have a direct bearing on the operation of politics in Fijian society. The main narrative of Fijian party politics in its first thirty nine years has highlighted that the end of an era of imposed rule from above, propelled by a socially constructed orthodoxy influenced the Fijian political discourse in powerful ways. In a culturally diverse society, the desire for power control became problematic and generated its own dynamics through the dialectics of unity and disunity.

The introduction of modern liberal democracy and party politics provided an avenue to challenge the socially constructed order in eastern and northeastern Fiji. Fijian political parties are a manifestation of this multidimensional challenge. These will have a direct bearing on the future of Fijian party politics as the many Fijian political parties attempt to reach a broader consensus. Perhaps, what Dr. Rusiate Nayacakalou had earlier alluded to, that stable political formations should be allowed to emanate from the people themselves, will be the future of Fijian party politics. These will inevitably transcend the ethnic divide as political parties search for common grounds through which to coalesce, control power and maintain long term political stability in Fiji.

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APPENDIX A

FIJI'S ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES UNDER THE 1970 CONSTITUTION

FIJIAN COMMUNAL ROLL CONSTITUENCIES

01. Bua/Macuata
02. Cakaudrove
03. Lau/Rotuma
04. Tailevu
05. Naitasiri
06. Rewa/Serua/Namosi
07. Kadavu/Tamavua/ and Suva Suburban
08. Lomaiviti/Muanikau
09. Ra/Samabula and Suva
10. Nadroga/Navosa
11. Ba/Nadi
12. Vuda/Yasawa

INDIAN COMMUNAL ROLL CONSTITUENCIES

13. Labasa/Bua
14. Savusavu/Macuata East
15. Suva Rural
16. Suva City
17. Nasinu/Vunidawa
18. Nausori/Levuka
19. Tavua/Vaileka
20. Ba
21. Ba/Lautoka Rural
22. Lautoka
23. Nadi
24. Sigatoka

GENERAL COMMUNAL ROLL CONSTITUENCIES

25. Northern and Eastern
26. Suva and Central
27. Western

NATIONAL ROLL CONSTITUENCIES

28. Vanua Levu North and West Fijian
29. Vanua Levu North and West Indian
30. Lau/Cakaudrove/Rotuma Fijian
31. Lau/Cakaudrove/Rotuma Indian
32. South/Central Suva West Fijian
33. South/Central Suva West Indian
34. Suva East Fijian
35. Suva East Indian
36. South Eastern Fijian National
37. South Eastern Indian National
38. East Central Fijian National
39. East Central Indian National
40. North-Eastern Fijian National

41. North-Eastern Indian National
42. North-Central Fijian National
43. North-Central Indian National
44. North-Western Fijian National
45. North-Western Indian National
46. South Western Fijian National
47. South Western Indian National
48. Vanua Levu/Lau/Rotuma General National
49. Southern General National
50. Eastern General National
51. Northern General National
52. Western General National

(Source: Fiji Royal Gazette, Vol. 109 (40). 4 August, 1982. Government of Fiji: 569-604)

APPENDIX B

FIJI'S ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES UNDER THE 1990 CONSTITUTION

FIJIAN CONSTITUENCIES

01. Ba Fijian Provincial (3 seats)
02. Bua Fijian Provincial (2 seats)
03. Cakaudrove Fijian Provincial (3 seats)
04. Kadavu Fijian Provincial (2 seats)
05. Lau Fijian Provincial (3 seats)
06. Lomaiviti Fijian Provincial (2 seats)
07. Macuata Fijian Provincial (2 seats)
08. Nadroga/Navosa Fijian Provincial (2 seats)
09. Naitasiri Fijian Provincial (2 seats)
10. Namosi Fijian Provincial (2 seats)
11. Ra Fijian Provincial (2 seats)
12. Rewa Fijian Provincial (2 seats)
13. Serua Fijian Provincial (2 seats)
14. Tailevu Fijian Provincial (2 seats)
15. North-East Fijian Urban (1 seat)
16. Suva City Fijian Urban (1 seat)
17. Serua/Rewa West Fijian Urban (1 seat)
18. Tailevu/Naitasiri Fijian Urban (1 seat)
19. Western Fijian Urban (1 seat)

INDIAN CONSTITUENCIES

20. Bua Indian (1 seat)
21. Macuata West Indian (1 seat)
22. Labasa Indian (1 seat)
23. Macuata East Indian (1 seat)
24. Cakaudrove Indian (1 seat)
25. Suva City Central Indian (1 seat)
26. Suva City Suburban Indian (1 seat)
27. Lami/Naitasiri South/Kadavu Indian (1 seat)
28. Nasinu South/Colo-I-Suva Indian (1 seat)
29. Nasinu East/Rewa East Indian (1 seat)
30. Nasinu North/Nausori Indian (1 seat)
31. Tailevu/Ra East/Lomaiviti/Lau/Rotuma Indian (1 seat)
32. Ra Central Indian (1 seat)
33. Tamavua/Ra West Indian (1 seat)
34. Ba East/Tavua Rural Indian (1 seat)
35. Magodro/Ba Rural Indian (1 seat)
36. Ba Rural Indian (1 seat)
37. Ba West Indian (1 seat)
38. Lautoka Rural Indian (1 seat)
39. Lautoka City Indian (1 seat)
40. Lautoka South/Viseisei/Yasawa Indian (1 seat)
41. Nawaka/Sabeto Indian (1 seat)
42. Nadi Urban Indian (1 seat)
43. Malomalo North/Nadi Rural Indian (1 seat)
44. Cuvu/Malomalo South/Sigatoka Urban Indian (1 seat)

- 45. Nadroga East Indian (1 seat)
- 46. Navosa/Serua/Namosi/Naitasiri West/Rewa West Indian (1 seat)

GENERAL CONSTITUENCIES

- 47. Northern General (1 seat)
- 48. Suva City General (1 seat)
- 49. Serua/namosi/Rewa/Kadavu/Naitasiri General (1 seat)
- 50. Ra/Tailevu/Lomaiviti/Lau/Rotuma/Naitasiri North General (1 seat)
- 51. Ba/Nadroga/Navosa General (1 seat)

ROTUMA CONSTITUENCY

- 52. Rotuma (1 seat)
-

Total number of Parliamentary seats = 70

Ethnic Breakdown: Fijian (37 seats); Indians (27 seats) General Voters (5 seats); Rotuman (1 seat)

(Source: Fiji Republic Gazette, Vol.6 (66), 22 July, 1992. Government of the Republic of Fiji: 1245-1249)

APPENDIX C

FIJI'S ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES UNDER THE 1997 CONSTITUTION

FIJIAN CONSTITUENCIES

01. Bua Fijian Provincial Communal
02. Kadavu Fijian Provincial Communal
03. Lau Fijian Provincial Communal
04. Lomaiviti Fijian Provincial Communal
05. Macuata Fijian Provincial Communal
06. Nadroga/Navosa Fijian Provincial Communal
07. Naitasiri Fijian Provincial Communal
08. Namosi Fijian Provincial Communal
09. Ra Fijian Provincial Communal
10. Rewa Fijian Provincial Communal
11. Serua Fijian Provincial Communal
12. Ba East Fijian Provincial Communal
13. Ba West Fijian Provincial Communal
14. Tailevu North Fijian Provincial Communal
15. Tailevu South Fijian Provincial Communal
16. Cakaudrove East Fijian Provincial Communal
17. Cakaudrove West Fijian Provincial Communal
18. North East Fijian Urban Communal
19. North West Fijian Urban Communal
20. South West Fijian Urban Communal
21. Suva City Fijian Urban Communal
22. Tamavua/Laucala Fijian Urban Communal
23. Nasinu Fijian Urban Communal

GENERAL CONSTITUENCIES

24. Suva City General Communal
25. North Eastern General Communal Constituency
26. Western/General Communal

INDIAN CONSTITUENCIES

27. Viti Levu East Maritime Indian Communal
28. Tavua Indian Communal
29. Ba East Indian Communal
30. Ba West Indian Communal
31. Lautoka Rural Indian Communal
32. Lautoka City Indian Communal
33. Vuda Indian Communal
34. Nadi Urban Indian Communal
35. Nadi Rural Indian Communal
36. Nadroga Indian Communal
37. Viti Levu South/Kadavu Indian Communal
38. Suva City Indian Communal
39. Vanua Levu West Indian Communal
40. Laucala Indian Communal
41. Nasinu Indian Communal
42. Tailevu/Rewa Indian Communal

43. Labasa Indian Communal
44. Labasa Rural Indian Communal
45. Macuata East/Cakaudrove Indian Communal

ROTUMA CONSTITUENCY

46. Rotuma Communal

OPEN CONSTITUENCIES

47. Tailevu North/Ovalau Open
48. Tailevu South/Lomaiviti Open
49. Nausori/Naitasiri Open
50. Nasinu/Rewa Open
51. Cunningham Open
52. Laucala Open
53. Samabula/Tamavua Open
54. Suva City Open
55. Lami Open
56. Lomaivuna/Namosi/Kadavu Open
57. Ra Open
58. Tavua Open
59. Ba Open
60. Magodro Open
61. Lautoka City Open
62. Vuda Open
63. Nadi Open
64. Yasawa/Nawaka Open
65. Nadroga Open
66. Serua/Navosa Open
67. Bua/Macuata West Open
68. Labasa Open
69. Macuata East Open
70. Cakaudrove West Open
71. Lau/Taveuni/Rotuma Open

(Source: Extraordinary Fiji Islands Government Gazette. Vol. 13 (35), 30 April, 1999.
The Fiji Islands Government: 355-418)

APPENDIX D

The Coalition and the formation of a multi-party Cabinet is a requirement of the 1997 Constitution. Specifically, the Constitution states that the Prime Minister must form a multi-party Cabinet according to the requirements of the Constitution. These include a fair representation of all parties with members in the House of Representatives. An extension of invitation to all political parties whose membership in the House of Representatives comprise of at least 10% of the total membership of the House of Representatives. Such political parties are to be in the Cabinet according to the proportion of their numbers in the House. If a party with over 10% membership in the House of Representatives declines the offer from the Prime Minister to join Cabinet, then the seats allocated to it can be offered to another party in proportion to its respective entitlement. In the case where all parties have declined the Prime Minister's invitation, except may be for the Prime Minister's party coalition partner, the Prime Minister may look into his own party or at a coalition of parties to fill the places in Cabinet. In selecting members from other political parties for Cabinet positions, under the 1997 Constitution the Prime Minister is required to consult first with the leaders of the respective parties prior to making appointments.¹

¹ See Part 3, Cabinet and Government, Subsection 99 (1)-(9) on the Appointment of Other Ministers. Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, 27th July 1998: 60-61

APPENDIX E

INDEPTH QUESTIONS WHICH GUIDED THE INTERVIEWS

Interview with Fijian Political Party leaders, politicians and other individuals on the formation of Fijian political parties and Fijian politics in general (1960-1999).

Part A

A itukutuku me baleta na veivanua e ra cavutu mai kina na veiliuliu ni Soqosoqo Vakapolitiki ni Taukei (A history of the vanua where political party leaders and other interviewees come from).

1. E rawa beka ni ko ni talanoataka na itukutuku ni kena tawani na nomuni vanua? (A history of the settlement of the interviewee's vanua).
2. E rawa beka ni ko ni vakamacalataka na isema ni veiwekani e nomuni vanua kei na so tale na veivanua? (An explanation of the relationships between the interviewee's vanua and other vanua)
3. E tiko beka e dua na ituvatuva vakavanua e na loma ni yasana, vanua, se matanitu ka ko ni vakamuraia? (Is there a traditional hierarchy which vanua in this region observe?).
4. Ke vaka e tiko na isema ni veimaliwai makawa vakavanua, e dau vakayagataki beka oqo ki na bula vakapolitiki vou? (If there are customary relationships amongst the different vanua in the region, how do these influence modern politics and party politics in particular).

Part B

Na itukutuku e so me baleti ira na iliuliu vakapolitiki kei ira na soli itukutuku me baleta na veika vakapolitiki me baleta na kawa itaukei. (A narrative of political party leaders and other interviewees who contribute to the narratives about Fijian politics).

1. E rawa beka ni ko ni talanoataka na itukutuku ni nomuni bula (bula vakacakacaka kei na bula raraba), ka ko ni vakabauta ni a vukea na nomuni laki curu mo ni lewena se tokona e dua na isoqosoqo vakapolitiki. (Can you explain some major influencing factors in your life which contributed to your joining party politics or in joining/forming/or supporting a political party(ies).
2. E rawa beka ni ko ni vakamacalataka na yacadra kei na nodra bula e so ka ra a vakauqeta na nomuni veitokoni se tauyavutaka e so na isoqosoqo vakapolitiki (Have you been influenced by certain people to join, form or support certain political parties).

Part C

Na itukutuku me baleta na yavu ka ra tauyavutaki kina na veisoqosoqo vakapolitiki ni Taukei e so mai na 1960 ki na 1999. (Information regarding the factors which contributed to the formation of Fijian political parties: 1960-1999).

1. Na cava beka e so na iulubale ka ra tauyavu kina na veipati vakapolitiki vakaitaukei. (What were some of the issues and factors which contributed to the formation of Fijian political parties).
2. E rawa beka ni ko ni vakamacalataka e so na veilalawa kei na vakatutu ka a tu ena veitaba gauna duidui mai na 1960 ki na 1999, ka ko ni vakabauta ni a vakavuna na kedra tauyavutaki na veisoqosoqo vakapolitiki e so, kei na nomuni a vakauqeti mo ni veitokoni kina. (Can you explain some of the major issues which emerged between 1960 and 1999 which contributed to the formation of Fijian political parties. Which issues were you interested in and why).
3. Na cava na kedra duidui na veisoqosoqo vakapolitiki ni taukei ka ra a tauyavu e na gauna ko ya (What were the major differences amongst the Fijian political parties which were formed at that time – 1960 to 1999).
4. Me vaka ni levu vei ira na isoqosoqo vakapolitiki vakaitaukei e veivolekati sara na namuma se vakanananu ka ra tauyavu kina, na cava beka na nomuni nanuma ni a vakadredretaka na nodra duavata? (While some or most of the political parties had similar ideas or ideology, why do you think it was difficult to unite the parties concerned).
5. E vinaka beka me levu na pati vakapolitiki ni Taikei se me vica ga? (Do you think it is good to have many Fijian political parties or to have only a few. Why?)

Part D

Na nodra itavi na noda turaga ni vanua ki na isoqosoqo vakapolitiki vou. (The role of the traditional chiefly institution in party politics).

1. Na cava na nomuni rai e na nodra vakaitavi na noda turaga ena isoqosoqo vakapolitiki ? (What is your view on the involvement of chiefs in party politics).
2. Na cava na nomuni rai ni dodonu me itavi ni Bose Levu Vakaturaga ki na kawa itaukei? E dodonu tale beka ga mera vakaitavi ki na kena tauyavutaki e dua na isoqosoqo vakapolitiki, me vaka ka a vakayacori e na kena tauyavutaki na SVT e na 1991? (What is your view on the role of the Great Council of Chiefs for indigenous Fijians. Should they be involved directly in the formation of certain political parties, like when they initiated the formation of the SVT in 1991).

Part E

Na rai tayaloyalo ni bula ni politiki veicurumaki vakamata-tamata e Viti e na gauna sa tu ki liu. The future of multiracial politics in Fiji.

- 1 Ni vakamacalataka mada na nomuni rai me baleta na politiki veicurumaki e Viti. (Please explain your views on the future of multiracial politics in Fiji).
3. Na cava ko ni nanuma ni dodonu me nodra itavi ko ira era sega ni kawa itaukei ki na pati-vakapolitiki e Viti? (What should be the role of non-Fijian citizens in party politics in Fiji).

Part F

Na rai tayaloyalo ni bula vakapolitiki ni kawa iTaukei e na gauna sa tu ki liu.
(The future of Fijian politics and party politics)

1. Sa vakanaulu tiko ki vei na bula vakapolitiki raraba kei na nodra vakaitavi ki na pati-vakapolitiki na kawa itaukei? (Where is Fijian party politics and politics in general heading?).
3. Ni vakamacalataka mada na nomuni rai ena vanua e sa vakanaulu tiko kina na politiki ni kawa itaukei ena nomuni raica lesu na ilakolako ka a tekivu mai ena 1960? (Please explain your views on the direction of Fijian party politics since the introduction of political parties in the 1960s).

APPENDIX F

Table 8: Results of the 1966 Legislative Council Election in the Indian Constituencies

Constituencies	Candidates	Number of Votes	Percentage of Winning Votes	Total Votes Countered/Percentage of Registered Voters Who Polled
Suva Indian	Irene Narayan (Fed)	5,676	67%	8,455 (87.2%)
	A.I.N.Deoki	2,779		
Tailevu Rewa Indian	K.C.Ramrakha (Fed)	3,220	72%	4,501 (82.3%)
	K.B.Singh	677		
	R.L.Regan	604		
South Central Viti Levu Indian	M.T.Khan (Fed)	4,380	72%	6,121 (77.2%)
	R.I.Kapadia			
	B.D.Moti	1,650		
	B.D.Lakshman	67		
		24		
South West Viti Levu Indian	A.D.Patel (Fed)	7,601	65%	11,626 (90.5%)
	Ayodha Prasad (All)	4,025		
West Viti Levu Indian	S.M.Koya (Fed)	6,318	74%	8,558 (89%)
	Jaswant Singh	2,221		
	C.A.Patel	19		
North West Viti Levu Indian	R.D.Patel (Fed)	4,704	52%	9,115 (94.3%)
	James	4,411		
	S.Singh (All)			
North East Viti Levu Indian	C.A.Shah (Fed)	3,799	58%	6,524 (92.3%)
	Vishnu Deo (All)	1,955		
	V.P. Bajpai	770		
Northern and Eastern Indian	Ranijati Singh (Fed)	2,323	65%	3,561 (86.3%)

		H.Kohil	1,238		
North	East	J.Madhavan	5,409	64%	7,903 (86.2%)
Vanua	Levu	(Fed)			
Indian		A.Gaya Prasad	2,494		

(Source:*The Fiji Times*, 12 October, 1966: 5)